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THE SPIRIT OF GOD

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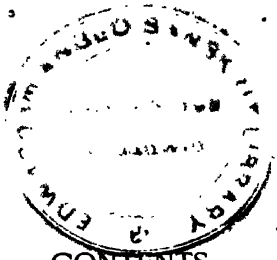


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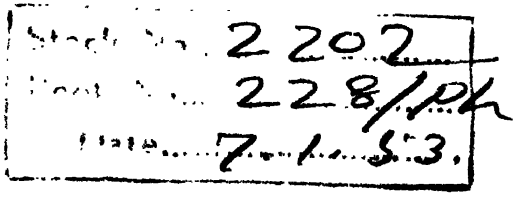
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PREFACE.

I FEEL helpless at the thought that all language is nearly worked out in conceiving, expressing, and glorifying God. Though inspired thought is an impulse that stirs one's being to the lowest depths, yet the forms left to embody it are the used up forms to which thousands have given thousands of meanings. How can I adequately say what is in me, so that the reader will readily see what I mean? There is nothing said — I have done my best to say nothing — but what has repeatedly come to me as the devoutest experience. I do not pretend to be a scholar, or theologian, or teacher. My utterances are only my personal record. And I have had to express them through a language which, do what I will, being a foreigner, I can use very imperfectly. But these transcendent experiences must be uttered. I only hope I shall not be accused of

misleading any one by dishonest subtleties, or conscious mysticisms, or saying one thing and meaning another. I have often failed in my utter incapacity to fitly conceive or unfold the Spirit who is beyond word and thought. In His name and glory I have only tried to describe His dealings with me, one of the humblest of mankind, that He may deal similarly with others to whom in the plenteousness of his grace God has given greater light, greater love, or greater holiness. May the spirit of God abide with the reader!



CHAPTER I.

THE SPIRIT.

REALISE as you may the presence of God, in sublime nature, in far-reaching events, in the divine lineaments of the best among mankind, or in your own soul, it is impossible to grasp the form of any created thing, or the whole of creation itself, and say, "This is he." All great forms, inanimate or alive, material or spiritual, in time, in space, or in mind, are his shadows: all voices, language, music, the inspired word, the sounds and breathings of nature, are his echoes. But the Reality is indescribable, inexhaustible, like everything, unlike anything, filling all things, seen in all things, beyond all things. The reality of the Spirit is an unutterable experience. What name will suffice for him, will be aught but the barest indication of his glorious fulness? We call thee Spirit, the Essence and the Unity of all. We feel after thee, we meditate on thee, we are awe-struck by the majesty of thy presence. We invoke thee,

O Transcendent Being, to make manifest before us thy wonderful ways!

WHAT IS HE?

Around that word-particle, God, countless associations have gathered, the most glorious on earth and sky, the profoundest sanctities known among our race, ever-ascendent powers of personality, the tenderest humanities. But the divine passion of our nature is still unsatisfied. Who can utter that name as he should? The utterance made can set no bound to the tide of ideas that arise. The song of the prophet was hushed, the vision of the seers was withdrawn long before the glory of God's countenance found adequate expression. The light of the worship of æons kindles creation; yet by the side of the Spirit's splendor it is a twilight: we feel our burning devotions pale like spent oil-lamps in the great morning splendor. We feebly halt on our way in the great pilgrimage. The generations taught by all religions are yet uninspired; the unity of man with God is an unaccomplished ideal; the ways of the Spirit are dark and unsearchable. Though, indeed, the most illustrious have shed their influences and examples, as lonely

rocks in the desert cast deep shadows and point the path; though there are fellow-pilgrims found straggling here and there,—yet it seems the last part of the journey has to be made in solitude and semi-nakedness, with none but the presence of the great Spirit as one's only companion. Let us draw closer to that companionship then. The visible things of the world, the invisible things of the mind, the figures and deeds of divine men, the signs of the times, when shorn of their grossness, slowly unveil God in the sight of devout thought. One all-investing Life, one perceptible Influence, one felt Presence, a ghostly awful Likeness which thrills through and illumines all the senses in flashes of sudden insight,—this Life everywhere is a marvellous Presence. The universal background of things is not void, the universal heart of things is not vacant. It is surcharged with the Spirit and presence of God.

HIS INCARNATION.

An abstract God is no God. He may be an idea, an opinion, a sentiment, a moral principle to satisfy the mind; but until he reveals himself, is embodied in something which the senses as well as

the soul can grasp, religion will never influence life. The incarnation of the Spirit is therefore the very first truth of all practical religion. The being and attributes of God are not mere inferences, but perceptions in the material and moral world. In continually higher, clearer, nearer revelations through all things does the Spirit approach our nature, till he makes his glorious abode in ourselves. We find our home in all objects, they find their home in us when God incarnates himself in what he has made. With all that is now knowable of him, he is here, all things show him, they are his forms, his thoughts, the features of his countenance deeply veiled. He lives in outward nature as the soul in an august body. He lives in man, the Life of his physical form, the presiding Spirit of his mind, heart, and soul. Humanity is his incarnation: the best among men are most like him. The Son of God is the type of that humanity.

HE IS UNIVERSAL.

All men see the Spirit, most men ignore him, exceedingly few realise him. That what is obscurely and unknowingly felt may be perceived through an inspired consciousness by all the facul-

ties is the object of spiritual culture. That amid the chances, changes, and delusions of life, this one Reality may cast his unfailing radiance in all dark places, and make a myriad manifestations of himself, that we may hold by him, dwell in him, know, love, and trust him at all times with the certainty and security we long for, faithful men in every age have spoken to us their experiences. These experiences are so simple and natural that under certain conditions of mental awakening they exact universal response. They prove not only that God is one, but also that man's nature is one. That man's nature is one, and nearly the same everywhere, proves that the Universal is in it, that God is the deepest spirit in all men. The seeking and seeing of such a God is most eminently natural, most wholesome to every man's heart: otherwise religion would not survive the wreck of so many systems and so many endeavors. Whatever ultimate mysteries there may be in the great depths of the Eternal Being, there is no expression that makes such a direct appeal to the restless instincts of our nature as that God is, that he is near, that he is in the heart, and that he is great and good, and we had better fly to him as to our refuge and

home. An unnatural God is the imagination of an unnatural man.

HE IS NATURAL.

That religious teaching which outrages human nature is undoubtedly false. The prevailing ideas about God are either abstract, or sentimental, or moral, or all three combined. Take instances. The Vedantic God in Hinduism is essentially metaphysical: the Vaishnava God, in another department of Hinduism, is extremely sentimental; the Christian God, as apart from Hebrew, is extremely moral. Now, as morality and affectionateness cannot be but in a person, the Christian and Vaishnava systems strongly and incessantly teach the personality of the Divine Being. On the other hand, as metaphysical ideas do not necessarily include personality, — nay, often exclude it, — the Paramatman of the Vedanta is abstract and impersonal. The character of the followers of a religion depends upon the conception of God they are taught to adopt. If your God is too abstract, you have a natural distrust of sentiment; if your God is too sternly just, tenderness and mercy have little influence on your character; if your God is too tender and indulgent, your moral character suffers,

and your theology lacks in insight. To be simple and natural, all three elements need to be co-ordinate and in due proportion. Any violence done to the naturalness of the worshipper brings the reaction surely, as all false creeds and false disciplines testify. Perhaps absorption in any religious pursuit, if sincere, whether metaphysical, or moral, or sentimental, cannot but exercise some influence on the formation of character: hence, on the average, all religious men are worthy of respect. But, surely, the spiritual leaders of mankind must cultivate the higher nature in such a way that the ethical, æsthetic, sentimental, and rational faculties may combine and co-ordinate in laying before us the fulness of the conception of God. Some day religion shall cease to be a philosophical extravagance; some day worship shall be the most wholesome thing in life.

WORSHIP AND INSPIRATION.

From the first dawn of man's history, so far as traceable, the Spirit of God has spoken to him, and he to the Spirit. The very first act of the world's worship was in response to the Spirit's call. That call may come from inarticulate nature,

articulate prophecy, or the mysterious pulsations of one's own heart. But no true worship is possible except when God breathes into man. Worship is the satisfaction of a craving appetite of the soul. It is not a discipline, it is not a routine: it is a sore need felt. It is sometimes an unconscious act. God inspires the feelings to devotional tenderness; intensifies, also, the love of fellow-worshippers. God inspires the reason to rapturous thought, or doctrine, or ideal, inspires the conscience to the sense of personal holiness and need of self-sacrifice, inspires the imagination to lofty ceremony and symbolic rite. No true worship is possible without inspiration, no true sense of the divine nearness and personality is possible without inspiration. The magnetic touch of the Spirit draws out man to an infinite search of his secrets, to infinite self-improvement and aspiration. How rarely and by how very few is that contact felt! The search is a success and an unsuccess. The Being is found, the beginnings of some of his purposes are revealed, infallibly revealed; but the last developments are not found. We have to trust in them; we have to expect them every day, or in the great beyond. Everything noteworthy in life, the least

or the greatest, involves a most wise secret of God; and we are insatiable seekers of it. The artist seeks beauty, the scientist seeks law, the philosopher seeks wisdom, the prophet seeks revelation, the poor in spirit seek assurance and rest. They say the very greatest things in the world, things truly worth knowing, are secrets to be patiently searched, found out with wonder, or to be waited for in great pain and anxiety. Measureless has been the advance of the nations in the knowledge of God; yet our thirst for that knowledge is still measureless. The light of lasting wisdom is the light of the spiritual heavens which lie concealed in the bosom of God. But the greater the advance in wisdom, the clearer and stronger the sense that the Spirit of God is ever familiar, though always equally new and strange, most like unto us in our deepest being, most congenial to our better nature. There is a unity in man with himself in his highest and lowest moods: there is also a unity with God. He created us in his own image; and it is profoundly true that when we are truly faithful God re-creates himself in our image, and breathes a new breath in us. Then only do we worship in spirit and in truth. In our feeble-

ness we cannot grasp him as he is. In his gracious strength the Almighty takes form in the meanest of his children, that our powers, such as they are, may not fail to lead us unto him. When we are most like unto what is truly good and great in ourselves, we are like unto thee, and thou art like unto us, O Spirit! Thou art never far, but always within our hearts. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence?" the Psalmist cried; and the wiser spirit of Augustine exclaimed, "I am afraid of God: therefore I will flee to his arms." Natural, indeed, it is to wish to flee into the parent embrace of the Spirit. When shall we be so simple and so childlike as to know how to do it? God's nature, rightfully viewed, throws light into every part of our nature. No one is so natural as he who has found God.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

But, surely, we are not exhausted by what is called natural. Human nature is infinite progress, rising from the animal to God. There is no real religion without the supernatural. We always eschew the unnatural, but the supernatural is not unnatural. In its endless, measureless growth,

nature unfolds into what is above and beyond itself. Nature is born from Him who is above and beyond nature, and in its turn leads us again to the supernatural. The intellect is not the highest power in us,—no, not even when touched with emotion or morality. Faith may be defined as the sense of the Infinite, or as the higher reason: it is the sense which transcends the intellect quite as much as love transcends self-interest. As soon as we limit the promptings of the Spirit within speculation or logic, or what is called the knowable, the whole exercise becomes metaphysical and uninteresting. By spiritual transcendent faith we surely know the unknowable. Natural religion is said to be the tomb of all historic cults. Repress it as we may, if the seed of faith has grown and taken root in us, it will look for strange things, for such phenomena as the ordinary range of observation can never expect. Now, immortal life is unknowable, God himself is unknowable, the communion of saints is unknowable, and likewise, also, the Spirit's self-revelation. By faith these are known,—known as much as is enough for this life: the possibilities of the man of faith are not to be measured by known laws. He knows

that in the spiritual kingdom the impossible has always happened, and will happen again. We always remember what we have been and what we have seen, and that is poor enough; but, with our measureless trust in God, what we are yet to be God alone knows, no one else. Let each one strive to be his best, to do his best, and trust in God. Then the Maker will make of him what has not entered into his remotest imagining. He who will gauge the future of the Dispensation of the Spirit by the yard measure of his experience, however devout his thought, will paralyse all hope and aspiration, will shut out the range of his destiny, and look back to the past as the end of the glorious possibilities of God. The revelations of the past are great, indeed: our hearts glow with thankfulness when we return to them. But man's own powers and possibilities are more glorious still. It is not too much to say that personal religion is impossible without the accomplishment of miracles in personal life, that faith and service will expect them in spite of ourselves, and, in the measure of that faith and endeavor, will unexpected things happen to a man. The spirit of God is, indeed, in all nature, in all things: they are his form, he is

their life. Nevertheless, he is beyond our view, beyond everything, more than all outside or inside. He controls, adapts, balances material things and human progress in ways unknown or most partially known, and that without departing from his fixed eternal faithfulness of law. For, as the poet says, there is no law without love, and no love without law. But love is always higher than law. Spiritual mysteries, occult harmonies, hidden processes whereby aspirations are fulfilled, wants relieved, prayers answered, and effects worked out, are all beyond the dream of our philosophy. But the supernatural happens so naturally that few beyond men of faith detect it. Miracles harden the unbeliever. Let us repeat, the supernatural is not unnatural; the unnatural is false and fleeting; the supernatural is nature beyond nature. The infinite will ever remain a mystery: there will be left a vast remnant of the dark unknowable in all religion that is worth its name, however definite and dogmatic it may be. That ineffaceable darkness of the supernatural looms in our horizon as the object of religion, feared, revered, loved, trusted, when all conjectures and calculations have failed about the deep things, the hidden things, the possible things of God.

THE SUPERHUMAN.

The distinction between the natural and supernatural leads to the distinction of the human and superhuman in the realms of the Spirit. The human is mixed up with the carnal, the worldly, the selfish, whether consciously or not: the superhuman is the pure spirit of righteousness, love, and truth. There is in most men a craving, — nay, more than craving, — an ineradicable expectancy of the superhuman. All philosophies have protested against it, but it is there. Every form of religion has tried to minister unto it; and sometimes science, or what is called so, has accepted that office. Intellectually we have shaken off the superhuman: practically, we often detect ourselves to be its slaves. Whence this anomaly? A spontaneous faith in the transcendence of the powers, wisdom and love of God, begets expectations and trusts we dare not utter before any man, except, perhaps, the genuine man of God, if we are so blessed as to have found him. Man's personal love for God, and God's love, or, rather, his unbounded supreme humanity realized in a thousand providences, will make no legitimate prayer, no

spiritual hope impossible. It is absurd to expect the fulfilmen' from our own unaided strength: it is absurd to expect from men the help that is adequate; yet the aspirations will rise, the necessities will force themselves, impossibilities will present themselves, and the glory of God shall demand their fulfilment. The wicked and arbitrary fancy of vain men to overreach and set at naught the wholesome laws and provisions of nature will continue to delude the world; but soon do we outgrow such fancies, yet the instinct for the superhuman help of God cannot be repressed. The man of faith, though apparently weak as a child, will find superhuman strength. Men see it, but do not believe. When our humanity ceases to be selfish, but is nevertheless compelled to hope and trust and struggle for what all human beings say is impossible, then the superhumanity of the Eternal gives us an accomplishment which in the highest sense is miraculous. It is thus that the humanity of man finds itself continually exalted to higher planes of trust and achievement; and thus, also, the sympathies and co-operations of God are proved to be intensely human and concrete. The genius of wickedness and self-interest has indeed sometimes

achieved almost impossible purposes; but its victory only lasted a little while, and soon recoiled on itself with inevitable disaster. The triumphs of spirituality are not only marvellous, but grow to be more and more marvellous, till the holiest of men become superhuman in our sight, and humanity is deified and worshipped. But all men are born with the inheritance of the divine: the Spirit hath promised to descend upon every one, and nothing is impossible to those who love God. By overcoming the flesh, the world, and the self, every faithful spirit shall rise to the height of accomplishing the superhuman purposes of God. Only what is superhuman is accomplished by the devout in such a simple, modest, exceedingly human way that it seems to be a matter of course. The man of spiritual insight alone can distinguish between the human and the superhuman.

FAMILY LIKENESSES.

There is a point wherein each man's spirit is in contact with God; there is a lineament wherein the family likeness between ourselves and our Father, between ourselves and the holiest of our race, cannot be wiped out. Yet no two souls are

alike, each one rounded out in the fulness of its individuality. If the resemblance lacks in any particular, a little needful culture makes up the want. There is such a thing as finding and losing our highest self. When the highest is found, the Indwelling Spirit is found, and the common, universal soul in all humanity is found. When it is lost, one becomes an outcast in the universe, like Ishmael, every man's hand against him, his hand against every man. When the accidents of birth, breeding, or station, when the tyrannies of heredity, or the necessities of circumstance are shaken off in the stress of some great responsibility or in the storm of some resistless impulse, this great, lofty nature in man suddenly discloses itself. Thus belauded hypocrites, under the fear of death, or the despair of downfall, or the fever of self-interest, have cast off their vain trappings to show the absolute meanness of their make. And thus a Swiss mountaineer or the consumptive daughter of a light-house keeper achieves immortality by the innate heroism of the soul. Even in the worst of men, however, the soul-nature cannot be wholly repressed: opportunities and possibilities of regeneration are never entirely lost. Sympathy from

a great neighboring spirit is apt to bring out the spiritual life of the neighborhood, as boring an outlying rock brings out the resources of a whole mine. This latent spirit-nature of each man saves him from the utter wreck to which all flesh tends ceaselessly, because it puts him in relations which draw nutriment from the surrounding mass of humanity. This is the sole ground on which Society or Church or State, or even family life, becomes possible: otherwise our animal instincts and sinful opportunities will make short work of every large or sacred interest. He who knows the secret springs of spiritual nature influences not only men, but mankind. Every mass of rock has an ore of some kind within its hard embrace; every wild herb has some healing virtue; every sky, however inclement, sheds some beneficent influence.

So the character of every man holds the divine somewhere. God knows it, the prophet sees it: we cynics do not. Each individual is a point of radiance in the great corona of humanity, whereof the substance is God. No, we need despair over none whom we love, not even the vilest and most abandoned; nor need we be vain that, being made in the image of God, we are each one of us called

now and then to the feast of the spirit. But it is as difficult to discern the peculiar humanity of each man as the presence of God in each object or event. The thing escapes us by its very nearness. In the grossness of our sight, we take account of the aggregates: the unit, in the minuteness and delicacy of its artistic detail, is imperceptible. But what is the value of the general without the accumulated excellence of the particulars? Almost as little as the abstract without the concrete. The workmanship of God differs from that of man in this,— that, while the latter makes an effect in its outlines and its general mass, the divine is infinitely beautiful the deeper you go, in the endless littleness of its atoms. The leg of a fly is more wonderful than Cleopatra's Needle. Therefore, we can be indifferent to no person, no people, no religion, no age in any state of development, "O Man," says the Persian poet, "thou coin bearing the double stamp of the body and spirit, I do not know what thy nature is; for thou art the mixture higher than heaven and lower than earth! Do not be cast down because thou art the mixture of the four elements: do not be self-complacent because thou art the mirror of the seven realms."

Every faithful man, in the uninterrupted meditation of God or the self-forgetful service of his fellow-men, is raised at intervals to an ecstasy of being. It may be calm, quiet, self-contained, well-balanced: nevertheless, it is a rapture, a fulness of realised manhood, a universal state of consciousness. It is not worked up, affected, or unnatural in any way: it is simple, unforced, wholesome, most human. Philosopher or scientist, lawyer, artist, or saint,— whoever is exalted to that state,— if he will give utterance to his mind, he will say and do things which all men shall acknowledge as their own truest thought. Poets, astronomers, prophets, and founders are all cosmopolitans, because they live in the city of God. Mankind in all lands feel at home with them. The Spirit which animated them is the One Universal Spirit, who is the higher and better self in each one of us. How the One Universal can detach himself into countless individualities, and again and often reunite these into the same Spirit, into the same undifferenced humanity all the world over, as it were into an identity of thought, heart, and aspiration, passes the understanding. No true poet is a plagiarist, no scripture of any great

people is an unacknowledged imitation; but the one all-pervading Spirit visits all, speaks to all, reconciles discords, and reminds us that man in his myriad phases is an indivisible unity. All poets sing the different verses of the same great song, all prophets deliver different parts of the same great message, all philosophers illumine different points of the same unsolved enigma. Thou, O God, art the all-inspiring medium! We live and have our being in thee. Thus one great, true word spoken resounds in all nations. The Americans say the first shot fired in the War of Independence at Lexington was heard in the whole world. In the transcendent consciousness of epoch-making men, how much is God, how much is man, who will discriminate? In the self-lost rapture of the devotee, who will say how much of the inspiration is personal, and how much is the glow of the Universal Essence? In such a man the Spirit-voice once declared, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased"; and the world has acknowledged that the Father and Son are one. These ways of the Spirit I shall attempt to trace. I crave the reader's forbearance.

CHAPTER II.

THE HINDU DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRIT.

FROM the earliest dawn of man's recorded life the Spirit of God has spoken to him in accents so real, yet so wonderful, that he instinctively sought the mysterious Speaker. The Being was found, but the vastness and height in which it was veiled nothing could penetrate. The inscription on the Temple of Isis at Port Said is, "I am that which has been, which is, which will be; and no man has yet lifted the veil that covers me." God, the absolute Being, requires to be specified: thus alone can we know him. We cannot know him in his infinite depths, but only in our human relations to him. These relations, however, are so complex, so manifold, expansive, original, assuming different forms in each man's case, almost in each circumstance of each man, that there is no end of knowing God. In nature, in life, in soul, in humanity, in revelation, in history secular and sacred, divine relations and dealings are unfolded

and have to be discerned. How to call him who has given names and forms to all realities? The Spirit seems to be the most appropriate name to call him by. He is the substance, the soul, the glory, the breath, the life of all things. We are spirits ourselves. He the universal, we the individual: the common name brings out the common nature, the common relations as between parent and offspring. The spirit can only comprehend the Spirit, can love, consciously obey, and be united with the Spirit. When God's nature is discerned, and man is one with his spirit, the destiny of all religion finds fulfilment. Two religions unfold the doctrine of the Spirit, and lay down the path of union with him,—the only two with which I am somewhat familiar,—the Hindu and the Christian religions. The conceptions are very dissimilar,—nay, sometimes apparently opposite,—but, to my mind, true according to their respective standpoints; though I confess the manner of presentation sometimes makes me hesitate.

CHARGE OF PANTHEISM.

It is not true, to begin with, that the Hindus failed to observe the distinction between the indi-

vidual and universal Spirit; but, as the latter was to them the supreme object of search and contemplation, as individuality often stood in the way of this intense spiritual exercise, the Spirit of God was regarded as the All-in-All, and the egoistic soul was either merged in devout identity or ignored altogether. Nothing can be more beautiful than the allegory which the oldest of the Vedas contains, illustrating the distinction between the individual and Supreme Soul. The Spirit of God, as a living embodiment, has been likened unto a swift-winged bird descending from the eternal skies to make her abode on the tree of human life. As the mother bird broods over the symbolical egg, and at last leads out her feathered offspring into the swelling harmonies of the upper air, so does the Spirit breed and bring up our spirits, at last carrying us on its wings into the music of the Infinite. "Two birds (the Supreme Soul, Paramatman, and the individual soul, Jivatman), always united, of the same name (Atman), live on the same tree (the human body). One of them enjoys the sweet fruit of the tree: the other looks on as a witness, needing no food. Dwelling on the same tree (with the Supreme Soul), the de-

luded soul (immersed in worldly relations) is grieved by the want of power; but, when it perceives the Ruler (separate from worldly relations) and his glory, then its grief ceases. When the beholder sees the golden-colored Maker, the Lord, the Soul, the Source, the Brahma, then, having become wise, shaking off virtue and vice, without taint of any kind, he obtains the highest identity." This not only sets forth the distinction between the two spirits, but also defines their relations, indicates the cause of their alienation and the process of their ultimate unity. There is not much rank pantheism here. Can other scriptures produce passages of equal beauty and simplicity, setting forth the august subject of spiritual relations? Such, then, is the essence of the Hindu doctrine of the Spirit, which has been and shall be the burden of the song of all philosophy and religion. So diverse, however, has been the treatment of this doctrine by men who have taken it up for their own purposes, that its thousand meanings are lost in the wildest speculation. Let me point out one or two of its uses.

CREATION.

Take, for instance, the subject of creation. The Spirit of God is adored in the Hindu scriptures as the originating principle of all that is,—a pure state of being from which everything else is mysteriously evolved. Asks the Book of Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast the understanding. Who laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest, or who has stretched the line upon it?" The Rig-Veda, in the tenth Mandala, makes that declaration:—

In the beginning there was neither naught nor aught,
Then there was neither sky nor atmosphere above.
What enshrouded the universe?
In the receptacle of what was it contained?
Was it enveloped in gulf profound of water?
Then was there neither death nor immortality,
Then was there neither day nor night nor light nor darkness:
Only the existent One breathed calmly, self-contained.
Naught else than him there was,— naught else above, beyond.
Then first came darkness hid in darkness, gloom in gloom.
Next all was water, all a chaos indiscreet,
In which the One lay void, shrouded in nothingness.
Then, turning inwards, he by self-developed force grew.
And in him desire, the primal germ of mind,

Arose, which learned men, profoundly searching, say
Is the subtle bond connecting entity
With nullity. This ray that kindled dormant life,
Where was it then? before? or was it above?
Were there parturient powers and latent qualities
And fecund principles beneath, and active forces
That energized aloft? Who knows? Who can declare
How and from what has sprung the universe? The gods
Themselves are subsequent to its development.
Who, then, penetrates the secret of its rise?

Dogmatize as we may about the origin of all things from the spirit of God, in their depths the theories fail. An ignorance which is not confessed, but must be felt, darkens the mystery of creation, and the cry still rises, "Who can penetrate?" The problem of originating force meets us in every part of the universe, in every part of our own experience, and resolves itself — if there be any solution at all — into the fact of turning will into deed. That man is a creator who can shape his subjective impulses into objective realities. All founders of all systems and all religions effected that. We do it, we smaller men, more or less according to the measure of the force in our character. We do it for good or for evil according to our habit and training; but the process of

doing none can explain. The proximate explanation lies in "inner fervor," "intense abstraction," and "desire, the primal germ, the subtle bond that connects entity with nullity." The Spirit's mind is in us: the process of that mind is also in us. Only the conscious union of the Spirit and ourselves,—that is the whole question which practical religion is to solve. The holiest and best in all lands, pre-eminently the Son of Man, solved it for us: to be like them is to solve it, but to be like them means the working out of the problem anew in the case of each man.

Speaking of the originating force of things lying involved in our will, of course we see that the materials with which we make are ready at our hands: we have not to make *these*. It was different with the Supreme Maker, who alone assuredly knows all about the "parturient powers" and "latent qualities," the "fecund principles" and the "active forces." Somewhat of all these is now known to us who behold the immanence of the Spirit in everything. Nevertheless, the very root of what is called "Matter" is unsearchable; and so are the dark foundations of the Spirit, and equally so the unities and differences set forth in the two.

But, in our profound experiences, we know the material achievements of the Spirit and the spiritual revelations of matter. From things that are seen we are insensibly carried to things that are not seen. But what is the magical *nexus?* What is the bridge of wonders that travels from the world to eternity? Here we are blind. But the Chandogya Upanishad likens the Paramatma (Supreme Spirit) to the great bridge. "Crossing this bridge, the blind cease to be blind, the wounded cease to be wounded, the afflicted to be afflicted; and, on crossing this bridge, nights become as days, for ever refulgent is the region of the Universal Spirit."

OPPOSITE HINDU CONCEPTIONS.

It is not true that all Hindus are pantheists, that all Hindus deny the being of the soul and matter as separate from God. It is notorious that Hindu religious philosophy is divided into two great schools. The Dvaita and the Advaita schools both believe in the pervasiveness and universality of the Godhead; but the former certainly insist on the supreme fact of Divine Personality, which makes practical and personal religion at all possible. Individual relations with the Spirit of God are not

only acknowledged, but laid down and classified in detail, which shows great spiritual insight. The alienation of the soul through sin and ignorance is also described: the moral responsibilities of man are not forgotten. The incarnation of the Divine Spirit is looked upon as the very first principle of all true religion. The love of God becomes a perfect self-immersion, a perfect inebriation. God is regarded as the Friend, the Parent, the Child, the Husband, the Master. The whole doctrine of incarnation is expressed most completely in two verses of the Bhagavad-Gita,—

"To save the righteous, to destroy evil works, to preserve the continuity of religion, I am born from age to age." God's incarnations are thus a progressive course of self-revelation. But, though all this be undoubtedly true of Hinduism, it is equally true that the Divine Spirit remains as abstract, pervasive, universal, and absolute as the national philosophy is reputed to teach. God is an unthinkable metaphysic essence. It must be confessed, however, that the human mind being narrow, individual impersonations of God are therefore called for. Hence the popular falling off into crowds of minor deities, each with a name, form,

function, who people the national pantheon. Too great abstraction in thought, on the other hand, has served to alternate faith, doctrine, and worship into that subtle all-encompassing pantheism the evidences of which are to be found in every school of the religious philosophy of the Hindus.

These two opposite extremes of conception perplex all right understanding of the Hindu conception of God. The one takes shape in the agnosticism and metaphysics of the Vedanta, which recommends itself to the sceptics of all classes and countries, the other in the numberless incarnations and complex polytheism of the Puranas, which characterizes modern Hinduism. A double formula underlies these two extremes. God, being the universal Life and Soul of creation, has made everything in near or remote likeness of himself. He is in everything: everything is his shadow, the putting forth of his thought-force and will-force. Hence whatever impresses us is the likeness of God. This is the source of the million of deities who fill the Hindu pantheon. On the other hand, all things, beneficent or terrible, good or bad, are ruled by God. He is above them, beyond them, more than they, different from them in his power

and essence. If he is above and unlike all things, matter or mind, known or unknown, what is he, like what, and how shall we know him? Thus God is unknowable. He can be defined only by negatives,— nay, nay. No condition can represent him, no mind can comprehend him, no quality can express him. Every statement about him cripples his infinity, and sets limit to the fathomless perfections. In a sense, indeed, both views are true.

But let us bear in mind that likeness unto the image of God is not to be God; also that, because the Divine Spirit is beyond everything made, he has not the power to abide and reveal himself in what he has himself made. The immanence and transcendence of the Spirit of God form the opposite poles wherein the whole system of Hindu religion revolves.

IMMANENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

Whether likened unto the vast canopy of the sky, where all things lie in their warp and woof, whether likened unto the sun, the all-revealer, or the thunder ready with its terror, the Spirit of God is most intensely assimilated in the genius of Hindu contemplation. He is now the Inspirer of

great dread, now of joy, or everlasting peace. He is now the Light, the Glory of all things, or the Essence, the Life, the Soul of the creation, and the Indweller in the spirit of man. His many manifestations are according to the different points of view from which the nature of God is studied; but, whatever these views may be, they all set forth the fervid immanence of the Divine Spirit. The manifestations of the glory of God in the forces and facts of nature give rise to the literature of the Vedas, commonly misrepresented by foreigners as nature worship. His manifestations in the soul of man were the source of the sublime literature of the Upanishads, the spiritual philosophy of the Hindus. And the incarnation of the Spirit of God in heroes and prophets in the history of mankind is the real meaning of the much abused Puranas. Thus the presence of God in creation, in the soul of man, and in his dealings with the types of the race, through religious and national dispensations, discloses the marvellous analogy that there is between spiritual Hinduism and the characteristic doctrine of Christianity. The Spirit of God is the source and substance of all things, the evolving principle in all matter, and bears

forth all souls. "As the spider casts and draws its web, as from a living man the hairs of his head and body spring forth," so is produced the universe from the indestructible Spirit. "As from a blazing fire consubstantial sparks proceed in a thousand ways, so from the imperishable Spirit various living souls are produced; and they return to him, also. . . . As flowing rivers resolve into the sea, losing their names and forms, so the wise, losing their name and form, pass into the Divine Spirit, who is greater than the great. He who knows the Supreme Spirit becomes spirit."

God is not a vast self-willed Demiurge who crashes in thunder through the overcast skies, or treads on the world in earthquakes, causing oceans to overflow and the mountains to tremble to their foundations,— that is not the Hindu conception of the world's origin. It is not the giant machinery of nature, self-made and self-evolving, soulless, neither creator nor created, but an all-devouring furnace of things from which this fair earth is vomited like smoke, or dissolved anon into the abyss whence it grew. This pantheistic dream is the delirium of moral natures gone astray. Rather is our Father the vast image of the Supreme

Purusha (person) described in the Rig-Veda, whose "one footstep is the earth, and whose second and third footsteps are the heavens," from "whose mind is the moon," from "whose eye the sun," from "whose interior are the skies, and from whose head the heavens." "From his mouth the Brahmin, from his arms is the Khetryia, from his feet the Sudra." He is the Source and Substance, Soul and Life and Form of creation. Out of his intense abstraction it grew. He is the Supreme Sacrifice who shapes himself into the devotions of the saints, into the offerings of the faithful, and is reproduced as the scriptures, and the enjoyments of the godly both in life mortal and immortal.

No religion with any pretension to spirituality sets forth as distinctly as Hinduism the immanence of the Spirit of God as the life and glory of nature. Nay, this naturally follows from the theory of creation described before. The substance of God unfolded into forms by spiritual self-action is the universe.. There is one glory, one beauty, one power, one life in all the worlds, and that belongs to the Paramatman. The Hindu conception of the Spirit is a pervasive Presence. "He is the binding chord," says the Atharva Veda, "which links

all things that are born." Not as mere Maker or Supporter or Ruler of the universe, not as a mere Mechanic and Mender is God to be adored, but as Indwelling Glory in all objects of all thought. The Atharva Veda asks, "Say who is this pillar-like One in whom all worlds, all creation, are held, all the waters and all the Vedas, all being and non-being, all vows that come from the devotions, and all works that come from the vows, in whom are held all reverence and all earth, the atmosphere, and the heavens, the sun and moon, and the fires and the winds,—say, who is this pillar-like One?" Indeed, it is Paramatman, the Spirit Supreme. The Brihadaranyak Upanishad says: "Man is indeed a tree, the lord of the forest: his hair is like the leaves, his skin is the bark. From his skin flows blood, as sap from the bark. It issues from his wounded body, like sap from the stricken tree. If a tree be cut down, it springs anew from the root. From what root does mortal man grow again, when hewn down by death? The root is Brahma, who is knowledge and bliss." All great books teach the interpenetration of the Spirit in every creature and in every object. There is nothing apart from him, nothing alien to him, though,

as the Talabken Upanishad says, "He is different from all things known as well as unknown"; "He who beholds all things in the being of God, and beholds God in all things, ceases from hatred toward any one." In the same spirit, the Bhagavad-Gita declares "that man sees God who realizes him as existent and uniform in all objects, the only Unchangeable in all this changeful creation."

The seeing of God, which is only a promise in other religions, is a realized experience in the Hindu teachings. Because, whereas elsewhere God is conceived as an exaggerated and preternatural Man, or as an imagined material glory, in our country the Divine Presence is the Light and Life of the creation. As our senses and faculties are purified and deepened, that vision becomes more and more resplendent; nay, there is no end to its glory. As the pervasive Spirit in nature, every man is able, if he has the faith, to behold the face of God as he beholds the soul of his fellow-men in the framework of flesh. As a material thing, God shall never and nowhere be seen. As the indwelling Presence, the eternal Person is immanent everywhere. "We behold him, even while we are here: not to know him would be a mighty disaster.

Therefore, the wise realize the one only God in all objects, and depart from this life into immortality."

The Spirit of God is seeable through three processes: firstly, through illumined intelligence, as set forth above in quotations from the older Hindu books; secondly, through the inspired poetry of devout emotions in the moment of prayer and contemplation. Numerous instances of this can be given from Oriental scriptures of several lands, Hebrew, Persian, and Hindu. And thirdly, through the unclouded vision of the sanctified conscience, characterized in the Sermon on the Mount as "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It is seldom given to any man to be in perpetual sight of the Spirit of God: that would mean the everlasting elevation of heart, intelligence, and will to the eternal heights. We have, each one of us, to take our rise and fall, our light and darkness, according to the measure of our souls and the merits of our endeavor. But every spiritually-minded man, if he at all believe in the possibility of seeing God, can behold him through one or other of these processes. The accomplished devotee, according to Hindu notions, has three eyes to behold God with,— the eye of pure intelligence,

of pure emotion, and of pure character. With these he enjoys God-vision in three regions,— in the past, in the present, and in the future, above the earth, on the earth, and underneath. In other words, the spiritual man beholds the Spirit in infinite space and in infinite time.

TRANSCENDENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

The vastness of India, the multitude of its people, its great lordly rivers,— some of them fifteen hundred miles long,— its mountains, forests, its natural phenomena of violent storms, rending earthquakes, devouring deluges, desolating famines, have always acted on the imagination of our religious leaders. It has been impossible for them to rest contented with small and limited conceptions of God's nature and power. The universal, the unconditioned, the everlasting, is suggested by everything. The extreme climate, both hot and cold; the highly nervous temperament, the overstrung emotions, of our thinkers,— contradict the mere mechanical relations of life. Of itself the mind mystically goes in search of the unseen, the vast, the immortal, and the eternal.

God contains, rules, and transcends these things.

Inner impulses thus favor outside suggestions, and the Spirit of God magnifies himself as the unconditioned Absolute. Everything that pertains to time or sense or space or intellect is carefully abstracted from him. He exceeds all limits: he is beyond all, unlike all, unbounded by law, or quality, or attribute, or condition. Only he is: nothing more could be said of him. Faith is sublimated into agnosticism, but it is a devout agnosticism. God becomes the Infinite Abstract. He enters into all things. They are his passing shadows. He alone is real: all else is delusion. He is all in all: there is nothing but him. In our vanity we imagine that we have some power or some being. The devout mingle and disappear in God, as a spark in the conflagration, or a bubble in the sea. Faith thus dissolves into pantheism. And thus fatal errors spring from good beginnings,—errors which, if we only knew how to avoid them, would exalt the faith of all mankind.

The Hindu doctrine of God as the Universal Being is familiar to all the world. The perception of the world, the consciousness of self, melt like cloud-specks in the sky when the Supreme Spirit overreaches and embosoms us in rapturous commun-

ion. This is intelligible to the man of spiritual experience. In God we temporarily forget all else, even that we ourselves exist. But, if the sentiment of devotional ecstasy is beaten into the dogma that there is naught else in existence, that the universe and the human self are but modifications of the Deity, men feel a shock: they feel that all personal religion and morality are slipping away from their grasp. When the Bhagavad-Gita teaches the indestructibility of the soul, saying that it cannot be cut asunder or burned or dried up or defiled, that it always lives, that it is inarticulate before birth, inarticulate after death, articulate only in the interval of life, that at the time of death it leaves the flesh like a faded garment and takes immediately a fresh form, we respond heartily. But when, as an inference from this, we are taught that there is neither sin nor inhumanity in slaughtering men, who are thus only hastened into the inevitable condition of further existence, we feel as if the foundation of right and wrong was being taken away from under our feet. Indeed, there is a universal soul in all lands, in all ages, in all men: otherwise, truth and goodness would not find this world-wide acceptance. There is a

universal humanity above temporary, local, and personal limitations: and that humanity is Divinity. But the individual and local is there also, all the same. It shall be there always, and its progress and perfection mean the necessity of religious culture.

In the Puranas, and in the Vaishnava scriptures generally, there is a healthy dualism, always recognizing the existence of the individual and Supreme soul side by side in the devotee's nature,—in simple theistic relations, as between the Master and the servant, the Beloved and the loving, the Father and the son, the Helper and the helpless. In the Vishnu Purana the great Vaishnava devotee Prahlada, thus replies to the threats of his persecuting father: "O father, what is the occasion of any fear, when in the heart one feels the presence of that eternal, reassuring Spirit, the very remembrance of whom dispels every fear of disease and death?" And then, later on, we find the benediction, "Unto the Indweller of the hearts of all living beings may your love and your purpose tend night and day! Thus shall you find deliverance from all manner of sorrows."

The fact is that no species of doctrine about the

nature and immanence of the Spirit is unknown to one or other of the various orders of Hinduism. The very multitude of the doctrines perplexes the believer. In trying to simplify them, one finds three forces of the Divine nature have, according to Hindu wisdom, entered into the formation of all things. The first is the force whereby God holds his own being and gives being to others; the second is the force by which he has intelligence and gives intelligence to others; the third is the force whereby he has love and joy and confers love and joy upon others. The first is existence, the second is reason, the third is joy. The first means the reality of being, or creation; the second is the reality of intelligence in all things made; the third is the reality of love or joy, which to Hindu thinkers means one and the same thing. The three best known names of God, familiar to all who know anything of Ḥinduism, correspond to this spiritual analysis. The first name is Brahman, the second is Paramatman, and the third is Bhagavan. Brahmaṅ means "He who is great and makes what is great"; Paramatman means the Supreme Spirit, from whom all intelligent beings have sprung, and who dwells in them; the third is

Bhagavan, which means "He to whom belong all the resources, all the forces, all the wealth of all the worlds, and who incarnates himself in all great men." Now, no possible conception of the Divine nature, ancient or modern, Eastern or Western, is possible beyond this threefold principle. The closest parallel between the Christian and Hindu conceptions of the threefold nature of God is here observable. The only difference is that in the Hindu evolution the Spirit occupies the second and in the Christian system it occupies the third place in the self-revelation of God's nature. The Vedas deal with that self-revelation as manifested in natural laws and objects, the Upanishads deal with the soul and intelligence of man, and the Puranas deal with incarnation and the dealings of God with mankind. We have not the remotest wish to compare the Hindu and Christian scriptures; but, generally speaking, the Old Testament corresponds to the Vedas, the Gospels to the Puranas, and the Epistles of Saint Paul to the Upanishads. But Christianity in the Old and New Testaments has mainly the dispensation of the Father and the dispensation of the Son, scarcely anything that can be called the dispensation of the Spirit. When the

last finds adequate record, the analogy between the Hindu and Christian schemes will become complete.

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

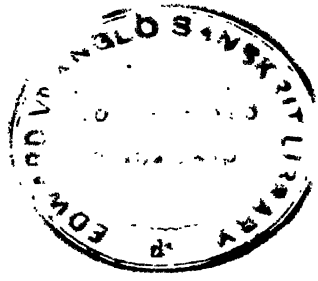
To see the immanent Spirit enveloping the universe means that glorious omnipresence of which nature is the fitting temple. It enlivens, inspires, intoxicates the seer, and obliterates all sense of the meanness and misery of life. The interpretation of God in nature shall one day furnish a new world to religion and a new wisdom of all things. The Isopanishad says: "Whatever objects there are inside the universe are infused with the Spirit of God." "Forsake all earthly temptations, and enjoy him. Do not covet other men's wealth." "On all four sides is the Eternal spread out. On all four sides is the Infinite and what seems to be the finite. He who is the Supporter of the universe knows all: knowing the past and future of all things, his Spirit moves in it." When the intensity of spiritual immanence was realized thus, the ancient Hindu could not but perceive that God was in his heart also. Faith in the Indweller necessarily follows the conscious presence of the Spirit in all things. Nay, it is the Presence

within that projects itself upon all matters of perception. There is nothing truly profound observed without that did not at first arise within. When faith in the revelation of God does not embody itself in beholding his Spirit permeate all time and all space, and when his self-revelation does not open unsuspected depths in man's own soul, well may we doubt whether the revelation is genuine revelation at all. The Upanishads are full of this profound insight: "In the great, golden recess of the soul the immaculate essence of Brahma abides. He is the white light,—the light of all lights." "That glorious sinless One dwells inside the body, inside the mind. The man of communion, when he has purged himself from sin, beholds him." "He abides in the soul, but the soul knows him not, he of whom the soul is like unto a body, who rules the soul, he is the Immortal, the great Person." This is not far from "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." See God where? Not "Lo! here," "Lo! there," but within thyself. Nay, only too often and too repeatedly is the sentiment harped upon that the presence of God is to be realized in the heart only; that insight, wisdom, communion, and ascetic self-discipline are

the means of purifying the inner perception; that passion, sin, and mental obscurity inevitably obscure the medium of vision. The weakness of man to effect this internal purification is once or twice confessed in accents of Pauline tenderness. Every Hindu quotes the well-known verse from the Vishnu Dharmottara: "I know what is righteousness, but I have not the readiness to perform it. I know what is unrighteousness, but have not the power to abstain from it. O Rhishikesa, thou art in my heart. Dispose of me as thou wouldst, and I would act accordingly." The ring of the apostle's cry faintly echoes in the ear: "The good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not that I do."

In the future dispensation of the ways of the Spirit the Hindu religion will surely play a prominent part, because at every step profound responses meet the seeker of God in all his lofty aspirations amidst the world of Hindu spiritualities. Their helpfulness and truthfulness are without end, though, indeed, care and discretion be needed in their study. Some day, when the one great Spirit-God is worshipped all the world over, the unbroken continuity of the race of spiritual

men, wherever born, shall be established. But all great accomplishment of ideal, while it re-explains the past and inspires profound impulses in the present, must be a hope and a promise, and rest with the future for its final effect. Does not this mean ceaseless prayer, ceaseless faith, and ceaseless work on our part? The Dispensation of the Spirit is a daily unfolding, a daily light and progress for the individual and for the race. When in this blessed, though difficult process, no personal experiences, even of the meanest of God's apostles, can be set aside, who dare think that the spiritual history of one of the most contemplative races of the world is to be ignored? But, to be included among the children of light, we must claim no more than is our due; we must be always conscious of our want, one-sidedness, and ignorance, always hail the Spirit's guidance and self-revelation from whithersoever it may come, give honor to all ages and the dealings of God with his people everywhere.



CHAPTER III.

DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRIT IN CHRISTIANITY.

THE doctrine of the Spirit of God as the Source of things, as the Presence, the Pervader, and the Witness, and the Indweller, is indeed old and universal; but the Christian doctrine is so characteristically personal that it is unique. Like the Hindu Paramatma, it is not a metaphysical substance, a sort of spirit-protoplasm of which the universe is spun out, a circumambient essence diffused through nature, implicit in all things, an intellectual abstract, a totalized consciousness of the race, an undercurrent of influence; nay, not even the mere Muni, the inactive witness and knower, who indwells the wrong-doer's heart and keeps record of what is done or thought. Whether all this be true or not, the Christian doctrine on the subject is very different. It is a tremendous personality, inalienable, concrete, living, permanently abiding in us. Its voice is stern, aggres-

sive, commanding,—sometimes still and tender also; but at other times the Spirit speaketh trumpet-tongued to the churches, "striveth with man," "lifteth up the standard against the enemy," conferreth the fierce gift of prophetic fire, and "poureth himself like the floods." The relation of the Spirit to man is an austere moral relation,—the relation of responsibility, of obedience, of voluntary self-subjection. God and man are two, not one. Awful anathemas are hurled against those who heed not the Spirit's deliverance. "Whoever speaketh a word," Jesus himself said, "against the Son, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaketh a word against the Holy Spirit, it shall never be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the next."

The dignity of this personal spirit, however, is not solely the dignity of sternness and power, but his relations are also most affectionate and kind. The Spirit is the most constant of friends. He is the All-holy God in individual relations with every man. The work of the Spirit is to shed the joy of the love of God in the heart. He comforteth; he testifieth to our hopes, helpeth our infirmities; he teacheth, revealeth, guideth; he compassion-

ately intercedeth for man with unutterable supplications; he is the ready Consoler ever present with us.

In the history of the Christian Church believers have often accorded to the personality of Christ absolute Godhead, and thus tried to find satisfaction for every spiritual instinct. But this was never without some kind or other of protest: it was not natural; and the leading minds of early Christendom were forced, after a few centuries, to determine in public council what place should be assigned to the Spirit in the economy of Christian theology. How far the decision then made has answered the exigencies of spiritual development we would not say, though perhaps, theologically, it has quieted some people.

JESUS ON THE SPIRIT.

Indeed, the Master at the time of his departure, even before, left the whole development of his work in the hands of the Spirit. The very conception of Christ by Mary was of the Spirit. "The Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her," showing that in Christ's time no theological difference between the

Father and the Spirit was observed. The child Jesus "waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God." At his baptism the Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. "The spirit-dove forsook the ark of Noah," says a Christian writer, "and lighted on the Church of Christ." He earnestly taught his disciples to pray, "for the Father gave the Holy Spirit to them that ask." "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles." And when, during his lifetime, Jesus sent his first apostles, "like sheep in the midst of wolves," he exhorted them to take no thought as to what or how they should speak; "for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of the Father which speaketh in you." He declares in Samaria, "The hour cometh, and now is, when ye shall, neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in the spirit and in truth."

Once for all, this should settle the question what

and whom we are to worship. When was Christ ever slow to derive the authority of his teachings from God, the Spirit, or acknowledge the deepest relations to him as long as he was alive? But at the time of his death was the relation expressed in most touching words. Though his words and example were there, amounting almost to his continued presence with the disciples, they were trusted to the keeping of no earthly successor, to no mortal protection, to no mutual counsel and consultation, no mere vague dependence even upon the Father but upon the ministry of the Spirit alone. Now, this was but the necessary consequence, the natural result, of Christ's whole life and teaching: this was the only consolation in his fearful death, which was an overwhelming crisis to the infant Church. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Holy Spirit will not come unto you." Could there be a greater adversity than Christ's disappearance from the earth? Yet such an adversity was preferable to delay in the Spirit's coming. "I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." "But the Spirit is coming to dwell with you forever." Thus Christ's life and death served as an introduction to the advent of the Spirit.

THE SPIRIT VINDICATED.

Is this Spirit, then, a theological fiction? The revelations which Christ made in his own person often fell upon unfruitful ground: hearing, the disciples did not understand.[1] Man's understanding in want of the Spirit must often be at fault. With the gift of the Spirit, his understanding grasps the most difficult problems that try him. What was lost when the Master went away, who should restore? What was not given because there was no fitness to receive, who should have the power to give? Three short years were not enough to explain the infinite complication of the approaching centuries. The fulness of the revelation must come with the fulness of time. Who will reveal it? Through what medium is it to come? "The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." "I have many things yet to say unto you, but yé cannot bear them. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you unto all truth." The personality of the Holy Spirit is thus endlessly testified to. He was the abiding Presence, the constant Indweller, the all-sufficing Comforter, the

supreme Interpreter, the Source of all inspiration, to whom Christ led up by all that he said and did, against whom whoever committed any sin was beyond the grace of forgiveness. Christ's divinity is, at best, an objective fact, and may or may not be perceived. It has not been perceived by millions upon millions of men. When not perceived, how can it be acknowledged? Even when acknowledged, as in the case of many lands and races, it has failed to form spiritual character. Much of modern civilization witnesses that; the military armaments witness that; unrighteous laws, cruel institutions, the organized selfishness of the classes, of the trades, and of the professions witness that. The Holy Spirit is within a man's own self, — the heart of his heart, the soul of his soul, bound to be felt and recognized in the innermost recesses where all is quiet. He alone can enlighten, exalt. reform, purify, through great suffering. The Spirit is the God who is ever a man's own God, who silences doubt, forces conviction, compels conduct. The Father is far above, the Son is far away: the Spirit abides with you always; and in the Spirit both the Father and the Son abide. Christ was perpetually conscious of

the Spirit's presence with him. Whatever he said or did in his life's work was at the Spirit's dictate. He subjects his whole nature, bodily and mental, to the Spirit's guidance. In no detail and in no principle of his ministry did he exalt his own self. He was spiritualized entirely: he was the Spirit made flesh. The glory of his transfiguration was spiritual glory. The glory of his crucifixion was spiritual glory: the material surroundings were mean and miserable. The glory of his resurrection was spiritual glory: it was no flesh and blood, but the spirit ascended into the kingdom above. We materialize him because we have so little of the Spirit. We know nothing higher than flesh and blood: we naturally turn his resurrection into flesh and blood. The Spirit of God glorified himself in the Son. By the light of the testimony of the indwelling Spirit alone have I recognized and loved and assimilated Christ, till he is my daily meat and drink. It is the Father who has led me to the Son; and, knowing the Son, I have known the Father all the more fully. Blessed, indeed, were those men who beheld in person the Son of God; and blessed are those who gave their witness as to what they saw and heard.

We cannot see what they saw: we can hear what they heard. Then in the dim twilight of our faith, amidst the shadows and evil possessions of the time, while there is so little to help, so much to hinder spiritual perceptions, what can we lay hold of or look up to except the all-powerful Indweller to rescue us from the besetting perils, and give us the needed help?

THE SPIRIT UNRECOGNISED.

But adoration, love, worship, have been offered to the Son without stint or scruple. Behold, the Spirit has no altar erected to him in all Christendom. We doubt not that the doctrine of the Divine Man has made the Christian Church the queen of nations and the mother of the humanities. But the personality of the Spirit to whom Christ habitually looked up, the prophets declared with "thus saith the Lord,"—a sublime, fierce cry,—whom the apostles recognised as their supremest impulse, the patriarchs bowed to, that personal Holy Spirit is scarcely anything more than ecclesiastic dogma. Marble and canvas, monastery and cathedral, drama, poetry, relics, traditions, and the boundless resources of Christendom have given what perma-

nence is possible to the divinity of Jesus,—nay, even to the Madonna, the "Queen of Heaven." We grudge not to give every honor to the Son: it has produced immense moral results, but why has the truth about the blessed Holy Spirit been practically exiled from the Christian's sanctuary, his home, and his heart? Except in formal responses and mechanical benedictions, or at festivals few and far between, who ever feels that the Holy Spirit is to be invoked with devotion and prayer, who ever dreams that our relation to his nature forms the source of the profoundest and most perennial revelation? The first descent of the Spirit on the infant Church is described with heart-stirring faith and graphic minuteness; but what Christian devotee is now ever heard to say that the Holy Ghost descended on him with Pentecostal power in any special crisis of life? Christ is described sometimes as reappearing on earth to convert sinners or reclaim infidels, and such conversions are set forth in unctuous phraseology. Except on the memorable morning when "the apostles were all with one accord in one place," one seldom hears of any unique event ascribed to the action of the Holy Spirit. The living Spirit of God, if he

ever appeared, seems to have retreated from the Church in the rage for popular Christology, or sublimated himself into an arithmetical supplement. To the Christian, Christ is all in all. We have already quoted the anticipations of the dying Christ about the future work of the Comforter. The interval between Christ's ascension and the end of the world is called Dispensation of the Spirit in the Christian Church. Two thousand years have come and gone of this new period. Vast and priceless experiences have been gained by Christendom; every sentence of the Gospels and the Epistles has run through numberless editions and commentaries. Will the Christian unfold what spiritual mysteries, involved before and darkened by time, have been solved to him by the Spirit; what new truths, unspeakable before, have been spoken; what new perspectives of life have been opened out? If there is no record to show, no new revelations to add, no progressive harmonies, no world-wide possibilities, the worshipper of Christ must admit that either the Messianic prophecy has not been fulfilled, or the Holy Spirit of God, having come, has disappeared, leaving the Church to the devices of prelates and councils. But we scout the suggestion. Christ's

promise has been redeemed. The Holy Spirit is active amidst the faithful, notwithstanding the darkened consciousness of an unspiritual age.

SAINT PAUL ON THE SPIRIT.

Its chief proof was the ministration of Saint Paul. He spiritualized the whole doctrine and the whole structure of the earliest Christian Church, drawing his profound faith and wisdom from the indwelling Spirit alone. His illumined eloquence bears the sure witness of personal realization. He rebuilt man's flesh and blood into a temple of the living God, and consecrated every limb to the service of the Holy of holies. He defined us as the sons of God; that is, as many of us as were spiritually-minded, and led by the Spirit of God. On the unity of spirit and variety of gifts he constructed the whole Church. The figure of many limbs, but one glorious body, shall always remain the visible representation of the household of God. He had never seen Christ in the body. To his vision, as to ours, the Son of God was a spirit. His doctrine of the raising of the dead is a spiritual resurrection, based on the everlasting truth that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of

heaven." He does not fear to contrast even the Holy Scriptures with the authority of the Spirit. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." His doctrine of liberty is the power of the Spirit over all flesh. The work of the Spirit, according to him, is the work of the tenderest sympathy, of intercession, of assurance, of constant, unending friendship. Every duty, every impulse, every judgment, all hope, all insight, all belief, all service, are thus kindled with the light of the Spirit. How is it, then, that the Christian, when he is conscious of an impulse from within, hastens to the written law, as if deeply suspecting the unwritten? Perhaps he opens the pages of the Bible at haphazard, so that he may confirm not the letter by the Spirit, but the Spirit by the letter. Certainly, the writer knows from repeated experience that sometimes responses from sacred passages, found without the least premeditation, are in wonderful adaptation to the soul's sorrow and needs; but, honestly speaking, not unoften this process fails also. When the Scripture disappoints, as it surely will at times, amidst the infinite complications of life the Voice within is the only law. When the Voice speaks, the Script-

ure, if rightly interpreted, is sure to give the confirmation.

TEST OF THE SPIRIT.

Too well must every religious community be familiar with the pretenders who feign the impulses of the Spirit. Like other great gifts, the gift of inspiration is claimed by the least worthy. But, nevertheless, religious impulses ought not to be discounted. Now and then the great Apostle of the Gentiles rises to the height of identifying the Indweller with the indwelt devotee, as when he says, "The Spirit searcheth all things, and knoweth the mind of God." Those who by spiritual union have thus searched and known the mind of God embody the Spirit, as it were, in an objective form; and that form is the Apostolic Church, the community of spiritual men. In the past the prophets recorded the deliverances of the Spirit: in the present the Church is its living interpreter. Thus we are brought face to face with three manifestations,—the impulse in the heart and conscience, the unanimity in the Church, and the voice of the dead recorded in the Scriptures. When these three voices speak in unison, the testimony of the Spirit's coming is complete: when

they disunite, the impulse may be for the man or the moment, never for all time. It is, however, essential to bear in mind that, whether for the individual or the Church or the race, the mind of the Spirit is never known, and the gift of inspiration not obtained, if the heart is obscured by passion, impurity, interest, or prejudice. The impulse of inspiration is always conditional on the holiness of character. Indeed, bad men do sometimes receive impulses; but that is more as a call than a covenant. The covenant comes when the call is heeded; when the vow of self-consecration is taken, then the Spirit descends to abide. In every life of true self-surrender there is a memorable descent of the Spirit. There is more or less of turmoil, personal and social relations are unsettled, internal needs and aspirations take the shape of a crisis. Choice, decision, a great venture into the unknown, must be made, or the alternative presents the appearance of utter hopelessness and death. Ceaseless and intense prayers become habitual, fierce excitements become the law, an all-filling all-piercing faith forces its way into the bottom of the soul. All calmness and respectability are laid by. Men filled with the Spirit have

intervals of great weakness, great depression; but weakness here means the emptying out of the soul, depression means capacity to rise. It does not mean death: it is an openness to receive the highest influences. Dependence upon God means an ecstasy that is soon to come. These influences, fitful at first, blend in the course of experience into a steady current of consciousness, and become a permanent state of mind. This is to be spiritually-minded; this is to be the son of God. Thus a higher nature dawns upon nature: a higher spirit, a self not your own, pervades you. You feel you are something more than your old self,— a stronger, happier, more helpful man, sufficiently able, under the Spirit's leading, to overcome the crisis that has come. The steady excitement pervades every faculty; the man rushes out of himself, as it were. A supernatural eloquence fires his tongue; he expresses himself with an earnestness and reality which will surely appeal to men. The possibilities of the children of the Spirit are beyond calculation: there is no knowing what they are going to be. Your so-called religious men are often as worldly —nay, more so — than ordinary men upon whom they look down. Unfortunately, the children of

the Spirit are often denounced as law-breakers; but it is they who make the world's law and apostolic succession. Indeed, the man of the Spirit is often so peculiar that he is suspected and hated. But every peculiar man is not therefore a man of the Spirit. So many assume the peculiarity to pass as Spirit-moved, and so many credulously accept them as such, that the warning cannot be too often given, "The test of the Spirit is in the heart and in the conduct." The fruit of the Spirit "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and temperance." The sure test of the Spirit is the power of transmitting it to others. The laying on of hands is a pregnant symbol; but, alas! how often those who lay hands on others need that grace themselves! The symbol is there: may the sense be there also! There is nothing deeper in human character than faith. When that is real, indeed mountains of difficulty are moved. That faith is never self-acquired, but God-given, though to keep it a man has to fight all the wild beasts. It is subject to continued refinement and elevation. There is progress in faith, as in every other spiritual gift. The gift of healing, the working of miracles, the power of

prophecy, the discerning of spirits, diverse kinds of tongues, the knowledge of men and things,—all come when faith comes, and faith comes with the Spirit's coming. The test of faith is the unity of mind. When two, three, or more souls are inspired by the mind of God, they unite. They unite by the omnipotence of law which binds the universe. Unity is the only test that God's Spirit abides in a community, whereas disunion proves the contrary. In a body of truly inspired men, no two souls are alike, but all are equally essential. There cannot be equality: there is the higher and the lower among the whole of nature's economy. The law of equality is a democratic dream, but there is co-ordination in the household of God. Mutual love and honor harmonize all inequalities. Unity is the seal of spiritual progress. Mutual subjection and mutual adjustment are the sign of the Spirit's work, all places and all functions distribute themselves naturally. Oneness of doctrine and uniform purity of character in various stations of life testify who are the elect. Indeed, some of the apostles showed great unwillingness to recognise the claims of Saint Paul to the place that belonged to him; but he did not hesitate to recognize

their claims, and, now that the healing hand of time has cured all personal misunderstandings, we have no difficulty in beholding in them all the mystic spiritual body of the Son of God,— namely, the Apostolic Church. In the subsequent history of the Christian Church the same silent leading of the Holy Spirit is observable, often, unhappily, through many errors and extravagances, even iniquities and outrages. Men and communities have been imperfect, but the progress of the world is toward perfection. The nearer that perfection is approached, the clearer the conviction will be that the Spirit of God rules the destiny of the world. In our minds the Christian and Hindu doctrines of the Spirit form a many-sided synthesis, which is continually enriched by the holiest experiences of the devout of all religions. The Spirit himself co-operates with man in dispensing his self-revelations through every great life-pursuit. The two religions we have reviewed indicate the poles between which those self-manifestations range. This is eminently the age, and the present aspirations make the medium through which the Dispensation of the Spirit shall be perfected.

CHAPTER IV.

SENSE OF THE UNSEEN.

WITH the bodily eye no one has seen, or shall ever see, the Spirit. But there is a sense in man whereby the unseen can be perceived. Credulity means a state of mind not far from real faith. Credulity is far to be preferred to unfaith. But, if the truth were known, every man would be found more or less credulous, sceptical here, superstitious elsewhere,— on the whole, showing a balance in favor of the sense of the supernatural. Nothing is so much in nature as the supernatural, the unusual, the uncommon, the unseen,— ay, if you so call it, the miraculous. Everybody boasts he does not believe in wonders; but, if he is careful in self-examination, and if he is candid, he will surely detect himself believing too much, not perhaps in the Deity, but in his own imaginings. Overfaith in the average man is oftenest shown in an involuntary consciousness of the presence of unseen things and qualities. The superstitious

generally fear this presence as something dark and malevolent; the intellectual believe it as a law, a necessity; the man of right faith trusts in it as a bright and loving guardianship. Barring the most self-sufficient cynic, every man who has any real earnestness in him is constrained to worship an ideal,—a quality or character, a principle or system, a humanity or a hope. This is a mystery forbidding a too close search. The delicacy of the consciousness resents every irreverent question. It silences reason, gainsays experience, dominates every faculty; it is arbitrary, impervious alike to fear of consequences, entreatics of love, and accusations of insanity. The awe felt in a gloomy forest after nightfall, or in a graveyard, or in the solitude of the sea, the involuntary suspicion felt against every sound, every voice, every footfall in the dark, has its root in the tacit, half-conscious acknowledgment — call it fortune, call it fate, call it Providence, call it *Karma* — that there is a Power, men believe, that presides over the circumstances of every man and every nation in their upward or downward course. We can propitiate that Power by obeying its laws as far as known to us; but we can never control it, nor be excused because

most of its laws are unknown or uncertain. We are responsible for our ignorance as well as for our disobedience. The Power is there, seen or unseen, known or unknown. We are always searching it, discovering it, losing it, finding it again, as if we were puppets and playthings in its hands. But we have in us a spiritual sense by which we know whence or how all this is, though it may transcend the usual calculations. Immediately behind the seen and known there is the presence of something unseen and unsearchable. The seen and known is a comparatively small area; the unseen and unknown is infinite, in which we all believe. Does not our very instinct of causality make such belief inevitable? Whether it be the domain of outward nature or the strange events of personal life or the rise and fall in a nation's fortunes, there is cause, there is law, there is an ordaining power in all that happens, the presence of a force, a will in perpetual evolution. Now, this universal sense of presence is such a sensitive feature of the mind's organism that, rightly touched, it develops into faith, conviction, insight, and spiritual wisdom. Wrongly touched, it degenerates into credulity, superstition, fanaticism, and endless folly.

The vital but little known principle of religious culture is involved in the right use of this simple, natural sense. And moral purity is equally necessary for the same purpose. Faith and purity, bound together and made alive by love to God and man, make the substance of all religion. The most cruel and dogmatic materialism cannot deaden the sense of the divine in man. It will break out, not in the field of scientific research, not in the discussion of theology,—the person takes special care it should not; but it will break out in his social or personal or moral relations, to edify the whole world except himself. The attraction for the occult is a disease or a bias inherited as well as acquired by every man. The weaknesses and strong points of all remarkable men, from Socrates to John Stuart Mill, bear testimony to it. Quacks and mountebanks will trade on it, atheists and secularists will unexpectedly fall back upon it, cynics and agnostics will scoff at it; but no one can cure it. Faith in the Divine shall draw out the spiritual — nay, even the physical — energy of us all. Only the self-revelation of the Spirit of God can give this faith its right object, and lead it to its glorious destiny of uniting God and man. All the

difference between true religion and false is not the difference in the degree of faith, but faith in the right object or wrong. Buddha did not accept either a theory of the soul or of the Supreme Brahma; but he devoutly believed in all the Vedic deities and antecedent Buddhas, and his followers believe that he was the Supreme Deity himself. The Israelites ceased to worship God, and for a time had no faith or fear in him; but they worshipped Baal, for whom they had both fear and respect. What the prophets of Israel did in olden times many a prophet of positivistic science and utilitarian metaphysics has done in our own day. Faith in the presence of an Unseen Being and his qualities is inevitable by the law of nature. If it is not admitted into the right quarter, then it is sure to make its way into the wrong.

From the foregoing it may be inferred that life-long and intense communion with God's Spirit can alone give the strong and vivid sense of his presence around and in everything,— God in everything and everything in God, though matter and spirit be always in their very nature contrary. This presence has in it every human attribute,— love, holiness, beauty, joy, force, unity, infinity,

every blessed quality to which contemplation may be attuned at the time,—one spiritual presence, which dissolves itself through the spectrum of soul-vision into all the varied tints of a personality marvellously like unto man's, though infinitely more than human. The presence of God is not a vague sense, or abstract feeling, or arbitrary faith, but shapes itself in every object of light and lustre, of strength and terror, sweetness and tenderness, in every kind of order, beauty, progress, and righteousness, in every insect, bird, animal, man, or angel. The sense of it inevitably grows as the mind grows in spiritual fervor. Nay, indeed, that presence cannot be put by in any stage of life or history. The elderly remember to have seen it in youth. The man broken down by ill-health and sorrow has a sudden glimpse of it in what he used to see in better times. It is the secret cord that binds the golden links of memory into the unity of life. It makes old age the instructor of youth; it makes the sacred writings of one land the scriptures of all mankind, and gives the true prophet, wherever he may rise, the ministry of all the children of God. The moderns believe the ancients had the clearest insight into it, and record

their imperfect achievement. The Jews believe the prophets found the Presence when Israel's king was no other than Jehovah, the Lord of hosts. The Christians believe the apostles found it, and since then our vision has been sealed. The Hindus believe the Rishis saw it; and in the Dwapar and Treta ages the Presence of God incarnated itself in various forms, which the Puranas describe. It is the one Presence we all see, as we see the presence of the sky and the sun; and every one is bound to recognise it, as soon as reminded of it by the man of authority. Dwelling in the least enlightened as blind credulity, this Presence is awakened in the sons of God as the fullest sense of union with God.

Every man born into the world has seen God, but very few have known him. Have you not seen life or intelligence, or beauty, or goodness, or purity, or force? You have seen them in thousands of objects. Apart from the objects where they are seen, what are they but the phases of one Divine Presence? The natural man will deny this, perhaps, though he does not know and cannot say what they are, or whence, or wherefore. The spiritual man knows, and can say the Infinite reveals himself

in nature. His spirit leads him forward to recognize the Spirit. Standing alone on the Himalayan cliff, as you cast your eyes over the precipice into the vast woods below, a vague awe seizes you, as if in the solitude there is something that touches you from behind. It is the same in the presence of towering summits of snow, or in a little boat amid great masses of heaving swaying waters, far from shore. In the loneliness and danger of your position, you feel you are in the presence of Something before which you are small and helpless. The awe felt deepens into dependence. In the massive forest of many shades, sounding with a hundred bird-notes, so strangely penetrating the intervals of silence, the fall and flow of streams faintly heard, all the sweetness, all the restful calmness of sight, sound, and color, does not lighten, but makes the sense of Presence more oppressive. If you utter anything, a prayer or hymn, or even an ejaculation,—and you can scarcely withstand the impulse,—your wonder returns with tenfold effect, as if a thousand voices have answered you. The Presence confronts you, strikes you: you are hushed, you bow before it, you kneel before it. You have seen the mysterious

being of God. His presence has a thousand forms and phases, differing in each object and force of nature, according to the capacity of the observer.

But scientist or seer, poet or ploughman, man, woman, or child,— every one must see God in some form or other. Seeing God is easy: recognizing him is difficult; but it is not much good to see until we know whom we see. And there can be no knowledge in this sense except through the revelation of the Spirit. That revelation never comes except through steady, heart-felt devotions, all-sacrificing search of the soul, through intercourse with devout holy men, and through ceaseless prayer that has survived every trial of sorrow and doubt. To the humble and broken in heart, to the man who has acquired sanctity as the reward of a lifelong moral struggle, to the man who has renounced all for the sake of his faith, to the man whom God has called for his special purposes, to the regenerate and the spiritually-minded, to his own Church and household, God's Spirit will reveal his presence. Seeing comes by nature: knowing comes by religious life. Seeing is a universal privilege: knowing is a special reward. The Father passes every man's threshold in his

glorious presence: we admire it all as natural beauty. Only the devoted worshipper who has sought him night and day recognises in that beauty the person of his Beloved, and is accepted into the inner sanctuary of spiritual vision. The knowledge of God is wonderful.



CHAPTER V.

THE SPIRIT IN NATURE.

WHEN the Spirit of God fills the soul like a medium, all things are seen as through a heavenly crystal. In the twinkling of an eye, as if by an unseen touch, an inner magic, all is changed, all is new, all is spiritual. An unsuspected meaning suffuses creation and human events. The power of the Spirit that inflames the seer inflames, also, what is seen. When the Spirit replies to the spirit, it is a wonderful music, a wonderful light, the vision of the New Jerusalem.

"We rose, and slowly homeward turned,
While down the west the sunset burned;
And, in its light, hill, wood, and tide,
And human forms seemed glorified.

"The village homes transfigured stood,
And purple bluffs, whose belting wood
Across the waters leaned to hold
The yellow leaves like lamps of gold.

"Then spake my friend: 'Thy words are true;
Forever old, forever new,
These home-seen splendors are the same
Which over Eden's sunsets came.'"

THE CHAPEL OF HERMITS.

The earliest process of divine inspiration is through nature's medium. The later, fuller, higher revelation of the Spirit does not exclude nature or supplant it, but discovers in it greater lustre, a deeper mine of spiritual analogy. When man's mind interprets nature, the result is poetry, science, art; when God's Spirit interprets it, the result is prophecies and scriptures. When nature loses its inspiring power, humanity also ceases to inspire, the scriptures become dry records or a mere moral stimulant, even the correspondence with the Indweller becomes every day fainter; spiritual death is the effect sooner or later. Every seeker of God must therefore retire at times into solitude within nature's sanctuaries, that the Spirit of God may there speak to him through symbols which his own breath has called into being.

The divine significance of nature is as old as the

religious records of the most ancient races,— nay, older; for it was there before man's faith and reverence could be embodied in any sacred writing at all. The hymns of the Rig-Veda and the subsequent wisdom of the great books of the Hindus, the Gathas of the Zend, the Psalms of David, the figures and parables of the New Testament, the ecstasies and visions of the Koran, are all full of the intuitions of God from nature. Perhaps a portion of these utterances will be found unsuited to these times. The world is silently moving forward in the paths of the Spirit's perfection, and is always spreading forth a purer atmosphere of religious thought around us. The spirit-world is in ceaseless formation; everything is forming it, every one is forming it. In spite of the glaring vulgarities of the present, the mass of mankind occupies a much higher plane than it knew in the half-seen past. Men judge by higher laws than they keep in their customary life. But, notwithstanding such progress, we moderns have not been, perhaps never shall be, able to outgrow the rapt vision of the ancients of God's glorious face in the mirror of all things. At best, we may rise now and then to the blessedness of that vision, be startled by its far-

reaching analogies and unfoldings. The reason of this may be that the old realism of nature has become an unpopular culture, and we speak of the unperceived Divine Presence in creation in a remote and suppressed vein. The Bhagavad-Gita sets forth the Virata Rupa (Universal Manifestation) as taking form and unveiling himself in mountains, rivers, overspreading impenetrable forests, in the ceaseless birth and death of countless living beings, in all the marvels of the universe. In the Book of Job the Lord asks: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who laid the corner-stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" The oldest, the most awe-inspiring sanctuary, now resplendent, now obscure, where every object can speak, and has a sacred mystery to unfold, where everything is the shadow of something higher,—such was nature to the prophetic worshippers of the past. Isaiah calls upon the forests and mountain-sides to break forth in singing unto the glory of God. But the modern priest of nature is simply "disturbed with the joy of elevated thoughts," or speaks of

"That blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened; that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul."

This is good, mild, and refined: it gently stirs our cold, unenthusiastic modern blood; but in the prophetic age the passion for nature was a fierce, wild insight, a sort of periodic madness, in the fever of which things laid bare their innermost meaning. A flight of birds, or a gust of wind, the flower of the valley or the veil of night, "dark daughter of day," or the light of dawn that "wipes away darkness like a debt," suddenly recalled to the seers memories, responses, combinations, continuities, likenesses, which slumber in us all as strangely overlooked or half-forgotten things of some by-gone birth. Any rapt communion with nature is set down as fetichism, or animism, or transcendentalism, or some other fine phrase that thinly covers contempt for all insight and spiritu-

ality. But, without positively worshipping the fires, the seasons, or the winds, may we not behold nature as the living manifestation of the Spirit of God?

It need not be disguised that we religious men of the present day are somewhat ashamed of our material surroundings. We suspect nature has at every step laid ambuscades to entrap our faith, and that the demon of pantheism is always lying in wait to devour us without giving any previous notice. So we keep out of material fascinations. We just read the one hundred and thirty-ninth psalm, or recite a verse from Mrs. Hemans's poetry, or from the "Intimations of Immortality," and think our obligations to nature are sufficiently discharged. For genuine inspiration we rush to our Kant and Hegel, or to our exegeses and commentaries, or read our scriptures, often the translations of translations, and see their meaning as through a glass darkly. We think the darkness has thrown sufficient light upon the mysteries of God and man; or, if it has not, we rejoice in the darkness as an advantage in itself. All personal religion is driven into the dim-lighted caverns of tradition, like the persecuted Christians in the time of

the Roman emperors. To behold the glories of divine purpose and God's self-revelations, we are not to search the living structures of nature which he daily raises and renews, but must dig up the catacombs of the past. Traditions and books and sacred histories of God's dealings have their untold worth; for they represent other sides of nature,—yea, a higher nature: history truthfully written is the way of the Spirit, the record of the unseen mind of God, which he that runs may read. But nature must include and interpret nature, the lower rising to the higher, sphere above sphere, the higher throwing down its light upon the lower. The outer is always the shadow and form of the inner: the present is the fulness of the past and the herald of the future. But our conceits and calculations have expelled the Spirit from what the Spirit himself has made; and in the throne of Providence speculation reigns and terrorizes. Our metaphysics hold us captive within ourselves; our theologies and historical revelations have locked up all inspiration. Nature is a universal blank, or a stimulant of mild poetry. It inspires, at best, landscape-painting in colors or in words, if it inspires anything at all above prospecting for

mines, enactment of forest laws, and the practice of sportsmanship. Be it so to the scientific Occidental, if it must. To us Eastern men the mystic ministry of the old mother continues. She is still the grand apparition, instinct with the living fires of actual God-presence, still the oracle that often resolves the perplexities of faith and conduct. The mountain is holy ground which recalls the associations of a thousand years, and awakes in the soul the spiritual raptures of revered ancestors. The ancient sanctuary still holds its presiding Deity, to whom every devout Aryan must make his pilgrimage. "Creation's cup sparkles with the heavenly wine in which" the Persian poet "saw melted his rosary and all the holy names around it." Not so very long since Nanak sang: "Behold, all the whole heaven is a sacred vessel! the sun and moon are lighted as lamps for thy holy vespers, and the stars in their sphere hang as clusters of pearls around. Breezes of the South fan thy altar, the winds burn incense, all the forest flowers drop as offerings at thy feet. Such is thy evening worship. O thou Deliverer from the world's snares, such is thy worship! Thy glory is sung by the uncaused harmonies of the universe."

THE PRESENCE IN NATURE.

From age to age this ancient world receives and reproduces its kind, moves, grows, breathes through leaf and lung, sea and snow and fire,—a vast reservoir of the mystery of a Life whom all see, but few know as the Presence of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God," the royal psalmist exclaims. "Day uttereth speech unto day, and night showeth knowledge unto night. There is no speech and no words, their voice is not heard; yet through all the earth their sound goeth forth, and their words to the end of the world. The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul; the precepts of the Lord are true, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of the Lord are clear, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the laws of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

All this exclamation is repeated again and again by the devout heart from the pages of the Bible; but to that same devout heart to-day Nature's voice is dumb, and the speechless glory of night is ineffectual. The Lord of glory,—where is he?

The same expanse of the wonderful sky enfolds all; but where is Varuna, the great Vedic Deity? "This boundless earth is his," says the Atharva Veda; "his the vast sky, whose depth no mortal e'er can fathom. Both oceans (sea and sky) find a place in his body; yet in that pool he lies contained. Whoever should flee far, far beyond the sky would not escape the grasp of Varuna, the King. His messengers descend countless from his abode, forever traversing this world, and scanning with a thousand eyes its inmates. Whatever exists within this earth, and all within the sky,— yea, all that is beyond,— King Varuna perceives. The winkings of men's eyes are numbered all by him. He wields the universe as gamesters handle dice." Coming down to later Hinduism, this spirit of nature only intensifies. "I am the father and mother of the world," the Bhagavad-Gita declares. "I am the pilgrimage of the good. I am generation and dissolution. I am the inexhaustible seed of nature."

God, in thy body I see all the gods,
And all the varied hosts of living things;
I see thee with unnumbered arms and breasts
And eyes and faces, infinite in form;

I see not either source or mean or end
Of thee, the universal Form and Lord.

.

I see thee glowing as a mass of light
In every region, hard to look upon,
Bright as the blaze of burning fire and sun
On every side; and vast beyond all bound
The undivided thou, the highest point
Of human thought, and seat supreme of all.
Eternal law's undying guardian thou,
The everlasting cause thou seem'st to me.

.

I see thy face, that glows as sacred fire,
And with its radiance heats the univ[illegible]
For all the heavenly regions and [illegible]
'Twixt earth and heaven filled by thee alone.
When thy mysterious, awful form is seen,
The triple worlds then tremble, Soul supreme.

The Bhagavad-Gita.

And are we to look upon this Nature as a vanity, as a delusion, and a snare? Or must we look upon her face with wondering eyes, full of the light of love and trust, as the child looks upon the face of its mother for the first smile of imperishable love and the first lesson of unerring wisdom? Yea, deeper and diviner wisdom there is than Nature's; but is not she nearest and clearest, simple and in-

exhaustible, revealing things above nature through symbols and senses suited to universal harmony? Science would be impossible without the records which the universe bears of its origin, life, and law; religion would be equally impossible. Supreme as the mind's place is, what is mind without nature's revelations? And, as for matter, creation itself would dissolve into nothing without the deep seeing of the spiritually-minded. The intelligence, beauty, power, life, order, permanence, goodness, of the world, are revelations alike to science and religion. Spirit and matter hold each other in mystic unity and equilibrium. But, when science rejoices over its full nourishment, and profits from nature, religion sits distracted and distrusting, and wearily searches for its precarious food in metaphysical creeds and old world traditions. This bright, marvellous, mysterious, haunted universe has no message for religion. The clouds still gather on Sinai, and the blooming bush at sunset burns with an unconsuming fire; but there is no Moses to approach them with reverent feet. The Voice, "I am that I am," is silent forever. The rose-tree flowers in Shiraz, and the nightingale sings its wakeful song; but there is no

Hafiz, intoxicated with the wine of divine love, to behold the face of the Beloved. The abodes of snow on the Himalaya are holy, but deserted. In the dark, empty forests the Aranyaks are no longer uttered, our vast rivers roll in solitude, the lips of the Rishi are silent, the voice of devotee has died away. The world is losing faith, first in God's creation, and then in God.

Come, let us rehabilitate, then, the spirit of divine communion in Nature. Of her universal framework God is the warp and woof. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him who is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The vast, quivering, pulsating body of the creation has the Spirit of God for its life-breath. This dim-lighted, incomprehensible sanctuary has him for its pervading presence and activity. Whence this intelligent unity immanent in time and space, law simplifying law, event throwing light on event? When he is not known, the deepest in all things is unknowable. He is all in all, amid whatever is seen: where he is found, all is found, or on the way to be. Everything calls the rapt spirit to unfold him, city and soli-

tude alike. The atmosphere of divine presence enshrouds all he has made. What thing is there in which his image is not? Not as an outer garment merely, that is put on or cast away without essential increase or expense to the wearer, is nature's relation to God, but, rather, if it is lawful to say so, the relation of body to soul, of form to spirit, of symbol to sense. Every delicate inner sense suits the organism outside, such is man's sensitive frame. The form and the spirit grow together, flowing into each other, the one giving shape or causing change in the other. Or, when the form is too frail for the spirit, its very frailty is lucid and eloquent. The Spirit makes, controls, breaks, remakes, and faithfully represents his hidden doings in all that takes place outside. He that reads these hieroglyphic phases is the true seer. We lack insight into all the infinite delicacy of soul experience that is reflected on the outside of things; hence our gross eye fails to trace the spiritual adumbration. We either mystify matter or vulgarize the spirit. The profoundest meaning of saintly life is that it ever struggles to realize itself in all its earthly concerns. The inner it makes outer, the spiritual it makes material: it makes

the Word flesh. When every movement of the outer organism, the home, society, the State, the personal habit, embodies or shadows forth a triumphant impulse of the perfected spirit, then man lives his spiritual life. Nature, in every form and feature of her grand organization, strains after a similar result. God speaks. The presence of the Spirit realizes itself in every impulse of nature, in all its beauty, order, wisdom, blessedness, in what takes place around you. Not by an arbitrary fiat of will, not by a paroxysm of energy, but by orderly, unending growth, by the gradations of law, does God convert his Spirit into material manifestations. What should reveal him hides him before the carnally-minded. "Nature," says Carlyle, "which is the time-vesture of God, and reveals him to the wise, hides him to the foolish." The Hindu doctrine of Maiya, or "illusion," does not mean that the objective universe is a dream, but that it is a disguise: it veils the Spiritual Being who pervades all things, and men are so far deluded as to believe that nothing exists except that which meets the senses. "The foolish think," Krishna is made to say, "that I, the Unmanifested, am endowed with a manifest form, not

knowing my higher nature, which is imperishable and supreme. Veiled by my mystical illusion, I am not manifest before all. This deluded world knows not the Unborn and Eternal." The formula of natural law in the spiritual world is not through nature to nature's God, but through the Spirit to nature. Every one sees the world, its beauty, life, and law; but these very things hide God from him: it is through God-vision that the divine view of nature is obtained. It is not nature that always interprets the Spirit, though sometimes it does so: it is the Spirit that interprets nature. Without the light of God's guidance in the soul, nature, or the science of nature, is a blind leader to the blind. The God-illumined only can follow the labyrinth of things and events. When the Spirit reigns within the heart, he reigns in all the universe.



CHAPTER VI.

THE KINSHIP IN NATURE.

A LIVING being is this vast nature, with the presence of the Spirit for its life, one with me, yet distinct, an august *not me* that puts this unquiet *me* to rest,—the deep rest of communion,—because to its remotest fact nature has a wonderfully human aspect. The farthest sweep of the telescope, the minutest research of mathematical instruments, discover and realize in their operations an intense family likeness between the observer's mind and the delicate adaptations of which he takes account. The soul with its transcendence is at home in the remotest corners of infinite space and in the furthest cycle of time. The soul is continually finding itself, finding the order of its own laws, feelings, and reason wherever it finds admission in the universe. If he was left to himself, as he has reason, if he had the might and the matter, surely man would embody himself in such another universe. All this glorious creation we

instinctively feel is the work of a kindred soul, the bodying forth of a soul, the effort of a soul to realize its deepest and best in outer forms, the presence and self-conscious activity of that soul. Every part in every detail, every mite, every molecule, is a shadow, a phase, a symbol, of the soul's perfection. God in nature's economy is profoundly human. Might not that account for a great deal of primitive worship? There are higher forms than what we call material forms. Matter can never fully represent the spirit. Life on earth can never be perfect. The universe, like human life, is but an effort, a ceaseless, growing, an ever-advancing effort. Both spirit and matter struggle to realize august ends, but never succeed. Success at best is an indication of what might be; the present, bright as it is, but a hint of the hereafter. And Nature confirms us here. In all her faults and fulnesses, Nature is strikingly like man. What need to point out the thousand deformities that shock our moral sense or the reasonable fitness of things when we contemplate the heaven and earth? Nature, "red in tooth and claw," need not deter us. No: it is not perfect,—perfect in nothing, but only typical of perfection.

"Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

.

"'So careful of the type?' But no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.'

.

"O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil."

In Memoriam.

Rending the veil that disguises the awful face of the Spirit in nature's temple, we find the Perfect active and ever present in the imperfect, the Eternal in all things of time and space brooding to bring forth the future of creation, the Holy Spirit of God in man, willing and working that all may be perfect as he is perfect. He who feels fully at home in nature feels in it the satisfaction of his deepest instincts. Every activity of his body and mind is called forth by its faults for sympathetic co-operation. He feels that he is but a part of something of the universal plan, finds nature popu-

lous with the dispensations of the Spirit. It is the same familiar experience as he knows in the ways of his own life. Things call out to him as kinsmen to a kinsman; and, in perfecting himself, he perfects all that is around him. In the presence of this mighty strain which a kindred spirit lays upon a plastic creation panting for its final goal of perfectness, there is a singular comfort in our weary strivings to be one with God. We feel we, too, are being carried by the onward stream of progressive life that tends continually to realize nature as the image of God. "For the thousand sufferings through which all things go at this present time are as nothing compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit,— even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption — to wit, the redemption — of our body. . . . Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us

with groanings which cannot be uttered." Nay, then, we are not outcasts in creation, making a fruitless search for the home of the Spirit-Father. All things join us in the eternal pilgrimage; and Nature, the supreme priestess, utters oracles the full meaning of which has not yet dawned upon us. Material nature, according to the Bhagavad-Gita, forms the lower part of the essence of God: his spiritual nature contains all his fulness. As a wanderer in some strange land forgets for a while all his woes when the kindly presence of the dearest of relatives, suddenly discovered on the roadside, shines upon him, so we, after all our unquiet cares and solitary troubles, find the soul of all nature. Our own highest self marvellously like unto us, though infinite, greets us from the furthest and nearest corners of creation, the vast abyss of things wherein we seem to be drifting. A mighty pressure constrains every creature. A predestined necessity checks the tendencies to lawless extravagance. The law of a higher will forces us all, very slowly perhaps, to accomplish the destiny of perfection. Nature is subservient to the spirit. Matter and mind help one another. Each atom rushes to its place. Each force expands into the

ultimate harmony of effect. It is a spiritual universe in which we live, matter only a means to the end. We, too, have a place in the universal framework; and, whether or not we can act and accomplish as we fain would, unceasing effort, doing our best and highest, each keeping his vow, that is the appointed course, and let everything else rest with God. The frail water-lily has in it the promise of the *Victoria regia*. The wild hedge-rose may some day bloom as the full-bosomed queen of the garden. Birds and animals have unfolded such wonderful powers under the transforming hand of culture that they can no longer be recognized as coming down from the simple old types. In the obscure borderlands of nature the dead are continually being raised to life, the simple are becoming complex, the mysteries of creation and evolution are taking place. Prefigurements abound everywhere. Surely, man alone is not destined to a miserable finality,—man with all the fire of his unquenchable aspiration.

Kindred to us in its imperfectness, kindred to us in the presence of the Spirit within itself, speaking to us ceaselessly, though we listen so seldom, has nature taught us all that we need

learn? Many a lesson of unearthly solitude and ever-enduring life, of tenderness and liquid sweetness and transcendent communion with the Infinite above, does the Himalaya teach; but has it finished all the message of divine presence it had to deliver? The mines have not yielded yet a tithe of their ores. The sea has not given up a tithe of its treasure. The stars have neither been counted, nor their glory discerned. Nature has not unfolded the full measure of God's presence in it. Commune with the old mystic mother still, ask and search, penetrate from sanctuary to sanctuary, plunge from depth to depth in spiritual absorption, you will find in nature further revelations of the Spirit of God. Has the vegetable kingdom been ransacked in its wealth and beauty? Spiritualize the tree, be a tree with the tree, let the protecting bark, the binding fibre, the spreading tissue, the rushing sap, the profound self-hiding root, represent stages of your own being to you. Who is it that laughs in blooming flower, and ripens into the fragrance and sweetness of fruit? In every season changeful, useful, beautiful, the vegetable promises and prefigures the animal, man, spirit, God. The tree seems to have a soul that communes with

you. The tree is not bare in winter nor rank in its summer foliage; but the Spirit of God instructs you through it, from the tiny fern on your wall to the deep, awful forest gloom.

Who can count or limit the correspondences of natural things with the supernatural? The natural and the supernatural are linked and continuous in the all-circling chain of eternal unity. Truth inner shapes truth outer. The invisible is made visible. God is one in matter as well as in spirit, one, indivisible. Of that eternal unity one-half, say only a fragment,— who knows the proportion of the unseen universe to the seen?— is material. All the rest is spirit. But insomuch as both have their source, their sustenance, their progress, and their possibility in the One, they cannot but resemble and reflect and reprint each other. The man of absorbed spirituality finds therefore the sanction and counterpart of his innermost contemplation in myriads of external facts and forms. His visions rush out in material embodiments, and the universe is turned into spirit in sculptured impulses wheresoever he may move. The spider weaves its gossamer threads of theory, sits watching at well-chosen angles, and entraps unwary

little creatures who come sailing in the idle wind. The ants and bees organize shrewd commonwealths, whose precision and economy are unerring, showing what the spirit of intelligence can do with the meanest, smallest live automata, showing also how much more could be done through man if he but yielded, and did not grieve away God's Spirit, that speaks to him. The everlasting mountains, piled up to the heaven, lie buried in shrouds of flimsy mist or show their awful forms in faint, mystic lines, like the Eternal's inexorable purposes, dim in the blind passions of the world, the mists seemingly solid, the rocks melted away. A silent breath blows off the clouds; and there the stern, everlasting summits stand out immovable, inexorable, outliving the passions and vanities of generations of men. The warm sunshine on the hillside, like the all-revealing love of God, includes within it the wealth of untold color, untold life and fruitfulness. It lays open every hidden thing, every secret of time, space, sin, sorrow, and death. There is more in light than any one knows. The dying Goethe exclaimed, "More light!" Our green, sweet earth is the hospitable mother, symbol of patience, lowliness, broad universal love, hiding

in her secret places every oppressor, every ungrateful son, every life misspent. The earth is but the bosom of the Mother divine, the depth of whose forgiveness and love is known but to the pardoned penitent. Every bird is an ascetic devotee, thoughtless of the morrow, though environed with a thousand dangers, sure of its uncertain food, clothed by an unseen hand, cheerful ever, deluging the wilderness with the sweetness of its song. A very thin, semi-transparent veil divides nature from God. An innermost faith pierces that veil. Time and eternity become one, and every shadow is dispelled from the awful self-revealing face of God.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE SENSES.

THE sense of the Divine Presence in all things is a gift of God, reward of faith, heaven on earth. It is unusual for men to feel it. It cannot be impressed on the minds of all, but perhaps in the minds of the devout you could call it out by unfolding your own experience. The body and soul perceive together that the glory of God encompasses you. But it has been customary to take no account of the bodily senses in spiritual perception. This is a sad blindness and serious disability. In the faith of the future the senses, as accessories of the soul, must play a vaster part, so that the mortal faculties may be trained to immortality. Directly cognizant as it is of the Divine, what were the soul without the miracles of sense-perception? These reveal in the first instance: the soul then discerns. The two work together, the senses striking one note, the soul striking an-

other; and the two together produce the instantaneous harmony of the Spirit of God. The mistake that antagonizes the senses to the soul antagonizes God to the universe. It sometimes blots out the universe to save God, or blots out God to save the universe, calling the latter *its* God. Indeed, there must always be an element of the subtle unknowable in the senses, between matter and spirit; and Faith will "arbitrarily" enthrone the Divine Presence when Reason withdraws in hesitating fear. An unsolved apparent dualism must always make the constitution of things. Why pretend to effect a specious unity which your practical instincts disavow night and day? Better far that, with the candid ancients, one should believe in the gods of light and the gods of darkness. But, when the God-intoxicated soul and the senses with all their contents form one apparatus, without the concrete power of the bodily senses the soul shrinks into an abstract entity, unfruitful, even doubtful whether it is or not. And so, without the glorious drama of the appearances of outside things in our view, God shrivels into an abstract formula, with which philosophers may play, but mankind feel little concern. With the fulness of all the

senses, the soul becomes a wonderful organ, both of self-knowledge and the knowledge of life and reality beyond. Thus, likewise embodied in the fulness of the universe, the Supreme Presence reveals himself as the all-filling Reality, the Father, the All-life, the All-in-all.

In his bodily and spiritual powers man is an indivisible unity: why fall foul of the flesh, as if it was made by the devil? Ay, it is true enough to say, "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard." But the eye does penetrate so far as to give instant messages to that other and deeper eye whose function it is to see the Spirit of God face to face; and the two eyes make one grand vision. "Man sees to a certain point," says Max Müller; "and there his eyesight breaks down. But, when his eyesight breaks down, there presses upon him something, whether he likes it or not, a perception of the unlimited, or infinite. It may be said this is not perception, in the ordinary sense of the word. No more it is, but still less is it mere reasoning. We know not what it is; but we know that it is, and we know it because we feel it and are brought in contact with it. If it is too bold to say that man actually sees the Invisible, let us say he suffers

from the invisible." This is well-guarded, but it is a half-utterance. To suffer is to feel: to see and to feel in spiritual things are but phases of the same perception. The sight of the soul and the sight of the senses form a continuous process, whose end is to realize the infinite presence of God. When the spiritual powers are quick, the senses respond readily to detect and interpret the mysterious Reality. All profound natural beauty is a veiled form and faint disguise; the spiritually-minded never fail to make the right meaning out of it. Many sounds leave an unfinished overture; many fragrances of the wood or the sea, the pure breezes, and the mountain herbs, stir up the depths in us. In such sense-perceptions we are aware of something that needs filling up. There is a feeling of sore inadequacy, when it cannot be supplied. Faith supplies it, and calls it the Presence of God.

The link between the senses and the soul must always remain a missing link. No science or philosophy has discovered it, and never will. Theories have only given evidence of human folly. In this *terra incognita* the voice of faith shall sing its remote song, the Spirit of God shall span the abyss

of mystery, and unite sense with soul from shore to shore. The most transcendent spiritualities are sounded first through the organ of the senses, and then played upon the many-stringed soul. Who transmutes these grand notes of the seen world into the harmonies of the unseen? Who spiritualizes matter into spirit? What miracle is this that reveals in these infinite analogies of physical fact and law the shadowy spiritualities of eternal life? It was not Paul alone who darkly declared, "Whether I was in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth"; and who "was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter." But this glory has belonged to other seers also, whose senses and spirit were blended into harmony. The Spirit of God thus lifts up his knowers from earth to heaven. Half in visible nature, half in invisible spirit, through the senses and through the soul thou comest, O thou Eternal Voice,— comest like some celestial music! The ages resound with thee, the scriptures magnify thee, the prophets expound, the psalmists sing; yet there is a new revelation of thee and a new insight day unto day. The music of the consecrated

senses, the purified bodily organs, of the God-seeker, sends an acceptable song to the all-holy throne. For, as the world incarnates God, the senses incarnate the soul. The eye stands for faith, which sees face to face. The ear stands for conscience, which hears direct the Divine Voice. The taste stands for joy, which is the immediate effect of the knowledge of God. The sense of smell suggests the fragrance of God's love. The embrace of the Spirit touches and thrills through us when we bathe in the breezy sunlight of the morning. The baptism of the flowing Ganges or Jordan is a communion of divine embrace. He touches us through grateful heat and cool, and in the thousand forms of prosperity and pain. The agreeable and disagreeable are alike the touch of the Father's hand. The purified behold the Spirit, hear his mandates, taste his blessings, live in the fragrance of his benedictions, and are in perpetual contact with him through the service of their lives. Certainly, you can commune with the Indweller through the soul only, forgetting for the time that you have any bodily senses, or that there is a material nature outside. In extreme physical debility, in great trouble of mind, in the approach of

death, this is at once apparent. But the fulness and joyousness of the Divine Presence is possible when the forces of the body and the forces of the soul bear evidence together that the glorious Presence enfolds you. The senses alone can partly make the joyousness of the experience; the powers of the soul can partly make the joy, truth, and sanctity; the two together can make the spiritual perceptions perfect. For there is no seeing of the Divine Countenance until the heart in its purity responds to the impression, and there is no purity of heart until the senses without and within act in deepest harmony. The force of faculty that strikes into the Divine both through the senses and the soul is the seer's faculty of vision. Call it faith or insight, spiritual intuition, or genius, it is there: it has many names, but it is the same power. It is most clear in some, not so clear in others; but it is distinct from the intellect, distinct from the emotion, certainly from the moral powers, of course much more distinct from the bodily senses. But feeling, reason, imagination, conscience, and the impressions of the senses enter into it, and mix in it as the elementary colors mix in the ray of white light. All the organs of man,

bodily and spiritual, do their functions perfectly, adding to the wonderful effect when the spirit beholds the Spirit. When Moses saw the burning bush, or Jesus the descending dove, or the disciples saw the three figures on the Mount of Transfiguration, or when Arjuna beheld the marvels of divine manifestation in the framework of material nature, it was not merely a devout imagination, but the senses beheld also. No one is competent to say what may happen to the bodily powers when the spirit is in holy ecstasy. At the supreme moment the entire human organism becomes instinct with latent fires, strange things are said and done. There is nothing merely material: all is spiritual to the spiritually-minded. There is no knowing through what thing, or what event, or when the Spirit of God will come to make his abode in you: everything with which you have to do, secretly contributes to that result. Nor is there aught merely ideal and abstract, for the Spirit shapes himself in every creature. The achievement of the Spirit, both in its human and divine aspects, is to force its forms upon material things. The Spirit that cannot carry out its purposes in what the senses acknowledge as real, is

neither God nor man, but an incoherent, egoistic dream. What is called idealism and what is called realism are only two modes from which the same Reality may be viewed: the Reality is all in all. He is perfect, all-rounded, complete. He can neither suffer waste nor increase. He is not continued into anything, even the most mighty and beautiful; but all things, in themselves incomplete, suggest that they are continued and completed in his will here or elsewhere.

And thou, O glorious Maker, hast cast the shadows of thy face on all things whereto thou hast given form! We see thee in our highest moods: we see thee not when we cease to be ourselves, and become animals only. Everything answers to thee, and thou dost correspond through nature with the spirit of thy children. All forms are fleeting shadows of thy Permanence. The Chinese alphabet has forty thousand letters, each the symbol of some true idea. Nature's primer has an infinite alphabet, the first few letters of which we lisp in a lifetime. Each object is a syllable, cuneiform and obscure, to be interrogated, deciphered; but it stands for an immortal idea, something higher than itself, some everlasting reality dimly sculptured,

a spark from the fires of the Eternal. God is not nature: nature is a tablet on which he writes his mind. On the dim and cloud-capped heights of communion the devout spirit reads God's mind. The spiritually-initiated read that language: the world-wise only admire the form and arrangement of the inscription,—they can go no deeper. But in the mysterious reading the senses and the soul play an equal part: the entire unity called Man penetrates the Unity of the world's spirit in matter, and form in spirit. Thou art neither seen nor unseen: thou art the element in which we are and in which we see. The senses have their beginning and their end in thee: their messages lead to thy door O Lord; and thou standest behind them as their unseen medium, to interpret their deep impression to the soul. It is impossible to express thy infinite sense within us: we can but make signs that we have seen thee in the inner sanctuary. Expression lags behind the intimacy of thy relationship to us. Attune all our powers, both of the flesh and of the spirit, to thy contemplation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPIRIT IN LIFE.

Most wonderful is the contemplation of life. Nothing is so simple, so certain, so universal as life. The existence of God may be denied, or of the soul may be, or of the world; but who ever denied that he lived? All our senses and all our faculties acknowledge and rejoice in life. Our cherished doctrine is that *the Spirit of God is the Life of all things*. From the smallest fungus to the most regal of created objects, humanity, the master of the earth, God's own image, heir of his omnipotence,—yea, in beings higher than man,—in everything that is, there is Life. Coming down from the darkness of the creative mystery in the measureless inconceivable past, evolving the future equally measureless, emerging from centres of being wholly unsearchable, transmitted from source to source, unregenerated and indestructible, fleeting away here, filling up elsewhere, its forms, phases, and abodes changing, its sum and fulness un-

changeable, what is Life? Who does not behold it, believe it, covet it, love it, honor it, preserve it, regard it as the dearest of all that can be, the very essence of his own self? Yet most certain it is that, whatever else we make or unmake, Life is not, cannot be our own making. We cannot keep it. Its growth does not depend upon our will. Its changes are unconscious, involuntary, ordained by something within us not ourselves. It is the underground of our own self, because we cannot conceive of our being apart from life; yet it is not our own self, it is so entirely beyond our control. Life is neither physical nor metaphysical. The senses perceive it, the soul realizes it, everything gives evidence of it; yet we know not what it is; we only know that it is. Mark the ascending order of Life. Like yet unlike in all things, from the inorganic to the organic, from the mechanical to the chemical and vital, from the physical to the mental, social, moral, spiritual; acquiring wonderful volume and completeness as it rises; one, yet strangely diverse; rising higher and higher endlessly; underlying all, overspreading all, creating, sustaining, dissolving, expanding from sphere to sphere, from sun to sun, from system to system;

rising ever, till it is lost to view in the unfathomable Infinite! Force in matter, growth in vegetation, animation in the living, instinct in animal, source of intellect, feeling, will-power in man, the upholder of his personality, the inspirer of his humanity, what is Life? All created things find unity here: the finite and the infinite are reconciled, the senses and the soul are in accord, the universe bears testimony to the Presence of Life, the All-in-all. Wordsworth sings:—

> "And I have felt
> A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

In striking testimony of all this is a wonderful passage from the Chandogya Upanishad, where, in a dialogue between Narada and Sanat Kumar, the latter says that the knowledge of the four Vedas, Puranas, etc., is useless without insight into the

nature of the Spirit of God. "The knowledge of these works is a mere name. Speech is greater than this name, mind than speech, will than mind, reflection higher than sensation (or the capacity of feeling), knowledge than reflection, power than knowledge; and higher than all stands Prana, or Life. This Life ought to be approached with faith and reverence, and viewed as an Immensity which abides in its own glory. That Immensity extends from above and from below, from behind and from before, from the south and from the north. It is the Soul of the universe. It is God himself. The man who is conscious of this divinity incurs neither disease, nor pain, nor death."

Science confesses the fact of life to be inexplicable. Professor Lionel Beale says: "There is mystery in life,—a mystery that has never been fathomed, and which appears greater the more deeply the phenomena of life are studied and contemplated. In living centres,—far more central than centres seen by the highest magnifying powers,—in centres of living matter, where the eye cannot penetrate, but towards which the understanding may tend, proceed changes of the nature of which the most advanced physicists and chemists

fail to afford us the conception. Nor is there the slightest reason to think that the nature of these changes will ever be ascertained by physical investigation, inasmuch as they are certainly of an order totally distinct from that to which any other phenomena known to us can be relegated." Elsewhere he remarks: "Between the living state of matter and its non-living state there is an absolute and irreconcilable difference; that, so far from our being able to demonstrate that the non-living passes by gradations into or gradually assumes the state or condition of the living, the transition is sudden and abrupt; and that matter already in the living state may pass into the non-living condition in the same sudden and complete manner. The formation of bioplasm direct from non-living matter is impossible, even in thought, except to one who sets absolutely at naught the facts of physics and chemistry."

Mrs. Annie Besant, whom her worst enemies will not accuse of any partiality for religion and God, thus reasons: "If from the blind clash of atoms and the hurling forces there comes no explanation of Life and of Mind, if these remain *sui generis*, if they loom larger and larger as causes

rather than as effects, who shall blame the searcher after Truth, when, failing to find how Life can spring from force and matter, he seeks whether Life be not itself the Centre, and whether every form of matter may not be the garment wherewith veils itself an Eternal and Universal Life?"

Thus the scientific man meeting at every step of his progress this strange apparition of Life, cannot account for how, whence, or what it is; is awed and bewildered, and silently passes on to the other side. Religion steps forward, and declares that this all-pervading life is the Living God, the Spirit, the Beginning and End of all things. "He is the best of the knowers of God who knows him revealed as Life in all objects," says the Upanishad; and Saint Paul's saying has become the world-wide proverb of religion,— "In him we live and move and have our being."

In our peculiar system of faith we have always insisted upon God being a Spirit, apart from every kind of form. Against every species of polytheism our protest has been loud and long. But the question must at some time or other arise, Can there be a Spirit without form? Is an abstract Spirit conceivable? Are we to be satisfied to conceive God

as no more than pure formless Reason, or are we to wait that the Spirit may reveal himself more definitely through the noblest objects he has made? Can simple theism define its God? The Christian has his historical incarnation of the Deity. His God is a person who actually lived, labored, and died. There can be no mistake about that. And, then, he gives concreteness to these historical impressions by embodying them in material features and physical surroundings. The Hindu does the same in regard to the incarnations which he adores. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas give a growing definiteness to religious conceptions, which thus become most vivid, clear, and concrete. Perhaps these teachings of historical religions help greatly to unfold our own theistic faith, and to reveal unto us dimly the lineaments of the Spirit whom we worship. But, nevertheless, if our religion claims to be a revelation, the "Dispensation of the Spirit," we must redefine God. He shall have a new name to us, he shall be a reality whom all our senses and our faculties are able to realize. He loves us, helps us, teaches, comforts, warns, admonishes us, daily presents himself at the blessed intervals of our daily devotions, and can it be that beholding

him in so many relations, so often communing with him, we are not able to give some outline of his glorious presence?

God is the fulness of Life in all things, the Life of the mysterious heavens in their processions of glory from infinite to infinite, the Life of all creatures in the sweetness and abundance of joy. His new name is the Living Presence. Thou art the august, eternal Life. O wonderful Being, in faith and holy awe we realize thee as Life in ourselves and in everything.

THE SPIRIT IN HUMANITY.

In speaking of the Spirit of God as the life of all things, there is some fear of the misunderstanding that we identify him with the material creation. We hasten to say that we recognize God as the life of humanity also. The humanity of God is a revelation. No man was ever the same as the eternal, infinite God; but God is supremely human. If he is the life of the mere material creation, he is much more the life of humanity. He is the perfection of humanity; there is none so human as he. What is good in man is consummated in him; what is evil in man can never be in him. All evil is

the opposite of humanity; all good is included in it. Humanity,—what a wonderful object! To what person, to what race or land does it not belong! Yet who can lay exclusive ownership to it? Truly, Humanity is a spirit, a union, a life, a personality ever unfolding in ceaselessly higher types, in perfection ceaselessly advancing, ever completing itself from the life of the universe to the life of man, yet ever falling short. Humanity, even most remote in time or space, recognizes itself, is, in fact, the same thing. How much recorded and unrecorded wisdom in humanity, what high measures of achievement, what fathomless possibilities! How much love, sweetness, faith, meekness, courage, strength! What manliness, womanliness and child-like simplicity! What grasp and sweep of action as well as ideal! A universal Self, recognized and adored by the best and purest of the children of men,—a universal Self to which myriads of minor selves have in every age been willingly sacrificed. What is of genuine personal worth in a soul realizes itself when thus merged in the Universal. Oh for an interval of self-forgetfulness and a submergence in the Universal Man! "He that hath seen me hath seen my Father." "I am the four Vedas, I am

the father and mother of all," the Gita says, "I am the giver of all recompense, the way, the Lord, the supporter, the witness, the abode, the enjoyment, the friend, the destroyer, the indestructible seed of all." The divinest man was the fittest type and organ of God. All human imperfections are removed, all human excellences are accumulated, in communion with divine Humanity. The loftiest peaks of the aspirations of all races are here kindled with the same light, the ideals of all religion are found true, and man stands as brother to man. Those men who rose to such realization are looked upon as gods. In the grand total of Humanity where all the earth's holiest, loveliest, are enshrined, see the living, acting, most historical God; for Humanity is not an abstraction, not a mere idea, but a Providence and a Personality. God is most certainly like man, though, indeed, he is infinitely more. What were the good of calling him Father, if he did not embody the perfection of paternal attributes, or Mother, if the sweetness and unfailing love of maternity were not to be found in the divine nature? His righteousness, mercy, truth, his everlasting heavenliness of wisdom and sympathy, make him like us. Sometimes strange scenes

occur. Perhaps in some fastness, in some provincial hamlet, in the obscurity of some unheeded region, a divine man — one unlike his brothers — is born, — a fakir, or a tradesman, or a cowherd, or a Brahmin, or a carpenter's son, or perhaps a self-exiled prince. The shadow of Supreme Humanity falls upon his head like a divine aureole, his influence spreads like wild fire. Living, dying, or dead, he reigns over men. We stand amazed before him. We then come to feel through him how very near and how very like God is unto us all. Near, yet far, like yet unlike, will there be any end to the attainment of God?

GOD IN EACH.

But this is not all. In the soundest of intellects there is often a vein of insanity; in the sweetest and warmest heart a spot of taint that cannot be rubbed away; in the purest conscience often a sense of something misdone, or not done, or done in an inadequate way. The ghastly spectres of past sins, long past, but vivid in remembrance, or cruel imaginations haunt us unexpected. Despite all the services of man to man, the need of further help to get afflicts the soul. To answer that need,

it is not enough to say that God is merely the life of the universe, or even that he is the living perfection of humanity. These are not the only definitions of the theist's God, but there is a dearer and nearer one. Not merely in the infinite expanse of sky and creation is he the life, not merely as a Father or Mother or Friend in the encompassing humanity, but he is the life of my own body and soul, he is in every circumstance of my own being, the soul of my soul, my daily comforter, a wonderful though often unseen presence in my heart, that perpetually renews and strengthens me as nothing can. As every man is like unto every other man, yet each differs in characteristics from the rest of the species, so, though God in life pervades all things and men, unto every individual he is different and special, such as the peculiar nature and condition of that person will require. Every life realizes him as peculiar to itself, different from all other lives, according to its needs and sorrows. God is total, yet individual, universal, yet special and personal. To every one of his seekers his image is a sweet divinity and a new revelation. Let us turn to him with longing hearts, as the life of the body and of the soul of each one of us.

Who knows what discords will then be healed, and what sorrows soothed? Who knows how many of us, long before the next day dawns, will be reunited in the abode where there is neither separation, nor misunderstanding, nor misery?

THE SPIRIT AS A PERSON.

Perhaps it is necessary to point out that it is not sufficient to say God is life: he is not only the Life, but the Person. Every one perceives life,—the senses quite as much as the soul; but the spirit perceives the Spirit-Person. Every one perceives God; but very few indeed, perhaps one in ten thousand, has beheld and known the personality of that wonderful Being. The power by which such recognition is possible is the power of faith. The Presence, the motion, the spirit, of which Wordsworth speaks as impelling all things, will be no better than a pantheistic dream, devoid of the integrating inspiring power of the Divine Personality. This is the supreme function of religion,—to discover, and develop, and teach. The province of religion is undebatable, singular, apart from every science, every philosophy, essential for the growth and perfection of man, because no other

pursuit can bring us to the secret of the living and personal God. The sense of unity, force, and identity in our own nature commonly called "personality" is a marvellous fact in psychology. It unveils a similar but infinitely higher Personality around. To us sufficient as this fact seems, we do not wish to overvalue its importance.

The old difference between impersonal and personal God, between the supreme subtle essence of the Vedanta and the active incarnations of the Puranas, between the Absolute and Unconditioned of the agnostic and the Hebrew's Jehovah, Lord of hosts, is not the only distinction, though it is most obvious between Deism and Theism. The doctrine of Divine Personality is not necessarily inconsistent with pure rationalism, because, after all, personality is a metaphysical thought; and we may very much brood upon that thought without believing and realizing God as an *actual person*. Such brooding thought may indeed call up the emotions, stimulate the imaginative faculty, influence the motives,—nay, call reason to its aid; and the entire mental process will be looked upon as faith, devoutness, spirituality, and what not. Yet every form of metaphysical spirituality, when it loses its

intense moods, falls back upon a plane from which the height of an attained consciousness that *God is a person* is separated by a gap which no mental strain is able to bridge over. The protecting, all-sufficing sense of the guardianship of an encompassing personal presence is strongly wanting in these so-called theistic systems. And in the last resort, despite all his fine doctrines of general and special Providence, the philosopher falls back upon his reason as the safest stronghold to escape from the assaults of infidelity and doubt. The reality that God is a person distinct from and outside of ourselves either comes as a wonderful experience, as an unforeseen and matchless grace, or as an historical fact which time and event have made undeniable. Most often the inner experience and the outer fact coalesce. When these two coalesce, they make the objective reality of revelation. Just as the existence of God and his attributes of wisdom, power, and goodness would be mere metaphysical talk without the beauties and beneficences of nature, so would the personality of God become empty jargon without the pregnant personality of man. The experience of personality in man unfolds with an undeniable authority the fact that personality

is a supreme principle in the economy of things, that our personalities are small and dependent, that they are overshadowed by higher personalities, and that God as a Person incarnates himself in the personality of the world-compelling men. It would be a fatal error to limit divine infinity by any, the most exalted perfections; but an adequate consciousness of God as the Person cannot develop without the experience of divinity in man. Not only is it necessary to eschew all false fears of what is called "anthropomorphism," but we must go even so far as to devoutly believe that the Supreme Person can but adequately reveal his nature in the regenerated, absorbed nature of the God-man. It is the person that can incarnate the Person, and every great prophet is such a person. Every prophet is not the equal of every other, but in greater or lesser measure the Supreme Person incarnates himself in all. There is only one personality in the universe of which we are perfectly sure, and that is human personality. If this could be made to bear testimony,—nay, if it was the vehicle of the infinite personality of God,—then indeed is our faith perfect. Nothing, therefore, and nowhere in the wide world, except in man

and through man, could we ever hope to establish the supreme revelation of the personality of God. But personality is not an idea; it is a real object, with intelligence, love, holiness, and joy. The Divine Person has all these, and is therefore so intimately related to us. He has these qualities in the fullest measure of the finite, so that the greatest among men draw from him the inspiration of what is beautiful in humanity. He is beyond the finite, so that when we know him best, we are abjectly conscious of how very little we know of him. But the overpowering and wonderful sense of the Infinite continually assimilates itself in spiritual character, making it loftier and loftier still. Something within impels us always to rush into the dark unknown background of the felt presence of God; we stretch our hand after the Eternal, like the child reaching after the moon. The unattainable makes what is attainable exceedingly and ceaselessly great. The universal intelligence of the Spirit keeps dawning upon us with every effort of the mind to know the truth of things; the passion for truth burns in the intellect night and day. But no one can know even the knowable truth; what, then, about the unknowable? The love of

the Spirit visits the loneliest and least, comforting all wretchedness with an assurance that suffices for life and death. It is love that recognizes love. Without love one cannot comprehend the love of God. The more loving the soul is, the more strong the sense of divine affection. Let a man be fully persuaded that he is the beloved of God with the calmness and tenderness of Christ. The sense of being unloved fills the soul with desolation and turns the world into a graveyard. The love of God, given and gotten back, is the only joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit. But it has to be always borne in mind that the Spirit is holy, and holiness in character only finds access to his love. The wicked who are penitent are visited with forgiveness and the marvellous peace which it brings, the heart that is broken feels for a moment the healing touch of heavenly love; but the perpetual sense of loving and being loved by the Supreme Person can come by personal holiness alone. The holiness of God reproves us in the conscience night and day, heaps suffering upon suffering that the wicked will of man may be broken into submission. The personal sanctity of the Divine, when realized in the moods of devotion, points out how far we are

from the land of our pilgrimage. God's personality encompasses us. The constant realizing of that Personality and its blessed attributes is the highest reward of spiritual life. It is impossible to hope that science will offer a conclusive testimony to religion, though it is equally impossible to think that it will forever remain unreligious. A reaction seems to have set in already. But no system of science, however comprehensive, can ever replace religion. With the utmost progress that science can ever hope to make, the work and advancement of religion will remain unimpaired, because, to its utmost stretch, science will deal with facts and laws of the finite, occasionally rising to a glimpse of the glory of God. Let us for the present remain satisfied with the reverent acknowledgment that there is, beyond the province of the mere intellect, an Infinite. Religion shall search that beyond and there — not by the exclusion of the intellect, which is an organ of the soul, but with as much help as it is competent to offer — discover, through a new wisdom, the spirit that pervades the finite and Infinite alike. "The trinity, the life to come, paradise or hell," says Amiel, "cease to be dogmas and spiritual realities.

The form and the letter may vanish away; the question of humanity remains. What is it which saves? How can man be led to be truly man? Is the ultimate root of his being responsibility,—yes or no? and is doing and knowing the right, acting or thinking, his ultimate end? If science does not produce love, it is insufficient. Now, all that science gives is the *amor intellectualis* of Spinoza,—light without warmth, a resignation which is contemplative and grandiose, but inhuman, because it is scarcely transmissible and remains a privilege,—one of the rarest of all. Moral love places the centre of the individual in the centre of being. It has at least salvation in principle, the germ of eternal life. *To love is virtually to know; to know is not virtually to love.* Philosophy, then, can never replace religion; revolutionaries are not apostles, although apostles may have been revolutionaries. To save from the outside to the inside—and by outside I understand the intelligence relatively to the will—is an error and a danger. The negative part of the humanist's work is good. It will strip Christianity of an outer shell which has become superfluous; but Ruge and Feuerbach cannot save humanity. She must have saints and

philosophers to complete the work of her philosophers."

FAITH IN THE SPIRIT.

I have spoken of faith as the sense of the unseen, as a faculty by itself, and not merely the sum of other faculties and feelings; and I have no hesitation in saying that this sense of faith perceives the supreme fact of personality of God,— it is specially and by eminence the religious faculty. It is the exclusive function of religion to clear up the sense of the unseen. Neither ethical nor emotional nor æsthetical nor the most exquisite philosophical culture can penetrate the mysteries of the Divine Personality. A haunting uncertainty, an anxious doubt, will never leave the most rational mind. It is useless trying to disguise it under devout phrases, well-formed opinions, or active duties. The heart confesses to itself a lack of soundness in its spiritual constitution. The culture of the religious faculty must not be confounded with the culture of the other powers: it is entirely *sui generis*. How can it be got? Faith can only impart faith, as life gives life. The ministration of the man of faith is the vital need of mankind; but the religious world idolizes scholarship and

oratory, and not knowing faith, seems not to need it. In itself, and unattended by the culture and harmony of the other powers, the religious faculty, though it may sometimes produce great insight and genius, does often, one is free to confess, associate itself with errors and misconceptions of all kinds. If attended by the culture and harmony of man's whole nature, faith will revolutionize the world again and again. There may be very wide and very real activities of the mind and heart without faith, and there may be strong and wonderful faith without collateral culture; but the tendencies of the age demand the concurrent perfection of both, and this alone is calculated to give that stimulus to the progress of the pursuit of religion so necessary to disprove the charge of unprogressiveness often laid against it. All the powers of man, touched by the spirit of faith, become spiritual powers. The intellect, sanctified, becomes prophetic wisdom; the feelings, set aglow by divine perception, are turned into profound devotions and the love of man; morality becomes holiness; imagination becomes second sight; faith unveils a world within the world. Everything is discerned in a new light, all nature unseals within its

laws new meanings and significances, the universe is spiritualized. When the insight of faith perceives the personality of God, all the faculties, all the senses, all the experiences, all the worlds, bring their confirmation. God becomes real, religion becomes real, immortality becomes real, and all doubt is at an end.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SPIRIT IN THE SPIRIT.

TO say that God is life, and also that he is a Person, necessarily opens the question, What is his relation to me? In the complex result known as life, how much is mine, how much his? If all force is divine, only lent to our use for definite purposes; if bodily, mental, moral, spiritual talent is only so much capital invested in us to put to usury, so that all the interest may be ours, though the capital is neither ours nor ourselves, — our place, even in our own affairs, becomes very humble and secondary. All the life-work got out of bodily or mental material becomes only a gift, or, rather, the effect of the service of Him to whom the force belongs; we become mere beneficiaries. But it might, on the other hand, be argued that the same thing is then true about the evil works we do. Certainly, even in what we do amiss, the force used is not ours, but divine. This, without affecting our responsibility, quadruples our guilt, be-

cause what was given for our glory is turned to our shame, and we degrade divine agencies to serve our own lusts. Man's self is, so to say, an empty sack, a mere sense of being, a mere choice between the good and the bad: all the force that makes up and fills his existence is divine. This *ego*, this first person, this number one that fancies itself to be the centre of creation, is but a geometrical point, an amorphous atom, an empty receptacle. I am but a sense, a capacity, a mysterious choice between what is God and what is not God: Thou, O Spirit, art all the rest. Fill thou the sense with faith and wisdom, fill the capacity with love, and turn the choice into force of will to be thine wholly. Then I will be thy son, one with thee; and the relation between man and God shall be determined. When man willingly yields to the purposes and forces of the Spirit, for a time indeed he may be tossed and lost, his heart may be cast down, and, like a straw in the whirlwind, he may be carried hither and thither, as if without guide and destiny; but, surely, at last his place will find him, he shall know and keep his relations, and no doubt will remain as to what he came here for: what he accomplishes will bear witness to that. When

man bends the forces of God to his own wicked will, as he is allowed to do sometimes, he may be served for a while well enough, apparently,—the greater the force entrusted to him, the greater his outward success; but he does not calculate what he has cast himself upon. The eternal concussion of currents that seem to bear him for a moment in triumph to his purpose will soon strand him on a retribution as sad as it is tremendous. The great majority of us suffer thus, and strangely fail to take a lesson from our suffering. Our unwisdom is a greater punishment than our agony. Man is indeed the heir apparent of the creation. He does not serve God a hundredth part so much as God serves him. The highest and everlasting relations are upset in ordinary life; but, even within each man's short earthly experience, the day of restitution comes at last, and we know who is master and who is servant, who is faithful and who is unfaithful. The judgment is sure. The restitution is also sure. Yield, therefore, unto the will and personality of God what is undoubtedly his. Know yourself, your true place and position before his august witness; and then the world also will give you what is your own. Every one is a usurper;

only he who forsakes *all* to follow God, only he who gives his life to his Father, only he is the prince of the kingdom.

The divine life and personality wherein we exist consist of God's love and wisdom, his power, purity, beauty, and peace of his Spirit. When these abound in us, and the sense of being — which is nearly all that makes for our self — is a sense of the fulness of these beatitudes within and without, then we truly live. For life is the adjustment of our inner state to the outer facts that go by the name of circumstance. Where the mind perpetually adjusts itself to all that happens to it from without, and never forfeits the consciousness of living in God, there is spiritual life. But such an adjustment may be passive,— a mere resignation, bland submissiveness to events, a trust, a dependence, an inactive looking up,— a fatalism, and nothing more. These mental states do indeed indicate some of the highest phases of life, but spiritual life means more: it means ceaseless action. What is inorganic in nature is dead, though exceedingly submissive and dependent; what is organic is most active, full of motion and change. The spirit of man is the highest organism in creation. Nothing

can be compared to its mobility, its power of assimilation, its growth, function, fruitfulness, its tendencies and complexities. Action, then, is the substance of living. Whether he heals or teaches, prays or contemplates, fasts or watches, rebukes or consoles, suffers or organizes, lives or dies, the man of God is the man of endless action. Action is the measure of spirituality. But the forces of the soul's action have been described already as divine. God is our life. Perpetual activity in God is the fit state of the religious man; when action ceases, life ceases. If our own actions somewhat depend upon our will, there are others' actions — actions without ourselves — that do not at all depend upon us, but, nevertheless, affect us most intimately. Circumstances constrain us and exercise pressure upon us, like the weight of the atmosphere which environs all things. No resistance within our power will deliver us from the constraint of our moral surroundings. Our deliverance lies only in the power of adjustment, in being able to suit ourselves to what happens to us. To what are we to adjust ourselves? To the will of Him who fashions all our belongings to the very changeful events of life. He "tempers the wind

to the shorn lamb"; yet he is in the stripes and chains, imprisonments, shipwrecks, popular tumults, and ultimate death: his chosen apostle must suffer. It is vain to hope for an easy, uneventful life. The whole world ceaselessly conspires to throw difficulties in our way. It is best we should make ready for them. The power of adjustment is the power of faith and love which, in these perpetual obstacles of circumstance, realizes the personality of God. Man is furnished with a spiritual organism whose faculties, if developed, will yield the faith and love that can bear all and overcome all. But it needs culture. Just as the poor and ignorant will succumb to the natural visitations which the higher classes of society will successively resist,—nay, not only resist, but turn into profit and longevity,—so from the trials of religious life the cultured and advanced spirit will, in every instance, draw nutriment for higher conditions of inner vitality. Our circumstances involve more than half the materials of our appointed destiny. "The winds and waves," we are told, "are always on the side of the best navigators." Unspiritual men complain against them, and allow themselves to be crushed in vain resist-

ance; spiritual men disengage their highest self from all this enigmatic opposition of surroundings, and appropriate for their use and enjoyment what others find to be the cause of misery and death. The highest spiritual life is the highest adjustment of spirit with matter and with circumstance. It gives wisdom, it gives strength, great peace in apparent difficulty, and the deepest measures of love to God and man. In his "Principles of Biology" Herbert Spencer says: "Were there no changes in the environment but such as the organism had adapted changes to meet, and were it never to fail in the efficiency with which it met them, there would be eternal existence and universal knowledge." This profound observation answers the requirements of earthly as well as immortal life. Every spiritual life answers a definite purpose of God, which on the side of the man means his calling or vocation. From the very lowest order all vitality means the combination of forces for definite ends, and their incessant adjustment thereto. In the merely physical organism both the combination and adjustment are unconscious; in the spiritual organism the effort is conscious,—though underlying it, the progress

in righteousness is there unconscious. Self-conscious goodness is another name for vanity. Humility and greatness ever abide together. For the nature, growth, function, and other operations of his spirit are most mysterious to the man of God. He is being carried along courses and through processes that no self-analysis or introspection will unravel. It is best that he should knowingly submit to the unseen Hand. Blessed is the man who has ceased to doubt about the purpose for which he was sent to the world, and who takes every pains in his power to husband his available means, that the purpose may be carried out through him! The one unchangeable thing in the incessant changes of life is faithfulness to its original purpose. Men have a wholesome prejudice against change of doctrine and character; but it ought to be remembered that unchangeableness means death, and life means ceaseless change. With every breath of air that is drawn, with every morsel of food that is eaten, a vast succession of changes take place. The atoms that make up the body, its heat, its electric condition, its bulk, its color, are rearranged and changed every moment. Perpetually we are in the process of a physical regeneration, though

our identity is never lost. It is the same with the spirit. With every true prayer that is offered, every devout thought that wells up within, every struggle at self-sanctification, every unselfish service to God, our entire spiritual nature is rearranged and elevated. It is a repeated higher birth and continuity of new life. The converse is equally true: wickedness and untruth displace every atom of the soul. We are reborn as vermin, and grovel in the filth and venom we create. Thus, like the restless ocean, the spirit-world is in incessant motion,—rising, falling, changing, heaving, stirring, creating a firmament by the sweet incense of what it exhales, or darkness and thunder and destruction on all sides. Souls of low vitality are uniform comparatively. They change but seldom and slightly. Then there is the long-drawn monotony slowly declining into death. Souls of high vitality are never uniform, but every day seething anew with a heavenly ferment that is continually mixed in their composition. To-day you see them thus. There is no knowing what they will grow into to-morrow; but they grow, grow,—never degenerate, ever change into higher forms of godliness. Ever-changing,

yet compacted, unchangeable unity, spiritual life, is exceedingly complex. It includes the development of every great power in man. It has so many points, and so many principles of vitality, that even should temporary decline overtake it in one thing, its abundant life is multiplied in other things. In matter or in spirit, where there is no change, there is no life. Complex organisms, as a rule, are longer lived than simple ones. The simplicity of spiritual life is in its purpose; its complexity is in the application of that purpose to every sphere and every function of existence. Inasmuch as the circumstances amid which spiritual improvement has to be made are infinite in their complexity, the life that has to adjust itself to them gains in complexity also, till there is almost no end to the changes, activities, and self-determinations of the religious man. Life in heaven must be a scene of unimagined activities. From the rudiments of life in the womb, when the human embryo shows no characteristic by which it can be known from any lower order of animals, what wonderful changes incessantly work to give man his definite form! It is this series of changes which, within a stated period, remake every atom of the

bodily frame, but retain — nay, strengthen — the integrity of the system. Changes likewise build up the spiritual nature; and every child of the Spirit is being remade by a process which casts him perpetually into new moulds without affecting his identity and continued self-consciousness. A process which differentiates a man from himself day after day, yet, without pulling him to pieces, integrates him all the more firmly into an indestructible spirit, is nothing short of a progressive miracle. In the entire range of organic existence this miracle is ceaselessly taking place. Every one is becoming better than himself or worse than himself always, without ceasing to be the same personal self. In the course of a few years he may become a new being entirely, though he is hardly conscious of it. Comparing what we were at the initiation with what we are to-day, the feeling cannot be helped that indeed regeneration has taken place; but yet every one is conscious of imperfections, which force upon the unwilling mind a sense that, after all, the corruptible part of nature still sticks to our being, that the thorn in the flesh cannot be pulled out. And hence the unceasing need of devoting all that we call ourself to the

absolute direction of the forces of God that beset us, and praying that his indwelling and outdwelling perfections may fill the emptiness which none can remove, and the defilements which nothing can purify.

CHAPTER X.

THE SPIRIT IN IMMORTAL LIFE.

GOD is our life here and in heaven. We live in him; he cannot die; how can we? He is the unity of physical, mental, and transcendental life. The essence of immortality is the consciousness that God is life. The living come from him. He makes their force, he takes away their force, they return to him; and we call it death. He is our hope in mortal life; "Whom in heaven have I but Thee?" Of the fulness of God as life there can neither be limit, nor description, nor adequate conception. Life on earth is no measure of life beyond death, but the highest life here is an unfailing earnest of a still higher life elsewhere. Death gains upon us fast enough, but immortality gains faster still. The daily death is the death of the flesh which changes and decays, and is yet revived without our knowing it. The daily life is the sense of health, growing strength, increasing joy and assurance in communion with the deathless

realities of the Spirit. Called up to life from a thousand forms of decay,— revived, renewed, regenerated day after day, under the Eternal's keeping,— none need fear that the last stage of change is without hope or promise.

PROMISE, INSTINCT, BELIEF.

The whole creation is full of promise. Who that looks for the first time upon these blackened skeletons of trees in December can think that the vernal blooms will return once more, and clothe everything in color and beauty? Who that looks for the first time upon the little white or mottled egg can think that it is the symbol of song and sweet plumage into which that feathered angel the bird will grow as it floods the sky with its untaught music? When the ignorant Nazarenes saw the infant Jesus on his mother's breast, could they form any idea of the glory of divine humanity hidden in that symbolic childhood? Every work of God is full of promise, but it is promise fulfilled; it makes our hope and faith certain. If you doubt not amidst the night's darkness that to-morrow's sun will rise, amidst the cold rain and snow-storm of December that the glories of the summer and autumn will re-

visit the earth, that youth will succeed infancy, that the maturity of manhood will follow youth's indiscretions, why doubt that immortality will succeed death? All scriptures of all nations promise immortality; all the prophets, saints, philosophers foretell and forestall it; all humanity expects it; all moral inequalities demand it; all evolutions anticipate it. How dare you reject all this promise? There is no devotional life that has not witnessed the fulfilment of a hundred promises of the Spirit,— miraculous fulfilments which have brought faith and hope unutterable. In the realms wherein the Spirit works every fulfilled promise unfolds a new promise, every accomplished hope a new hope, and every ascending stage of life opens the prospect of a still higher ascent. Thus earth promises heaven, and life promises immortality.

But the soul's immortality is more than a mere individual hope and promise; it is a universal belief and instinct. Not all the reasoning against a future life has made man a whit less believing, not all the arguments in its favor have made men's belief more sure. We are very much where our fathers were in this matter. We are very much

the same in our attitude to immortality as to God's existence and attributes, nay even the existence of our own souls. The argument of unbelief shakes us for a moment as a passing wind shakes the forest, and the analogies of nature and life confirm for the while as an April sunshine lights up the landscape; but the intuitions about God, soul, and immortality survive all. The Christian believes in a resurrection of the body, the Musalman believes in a Käamat, the Hindu believes in a rebirth, the savage believes in a hundred ghost stories, and our ultra-civilized agnostic in spirit-rappings, astral bodies, auras, and various other species of necromantic fancies. It is the original instinct of the old Adam uttering itself in different accents of well-founded superstition. We have no quarrel with these men, as we have no quarrel with the various believers in conflicting forms of fetichism and polytheism. Aberrations in belief only testify to the universality of the instinct.

EXPERIENCE, INSIGHT, HABIT.

Immortal life is much more than a mere belief or instinct; it is an insight and experience. The belief has done a great deal of good, but it has never

been operative without the other. Sure faith in future life is the result of actual experience of life in God. For life in the Spirit of God is a deathless life which we have lived, or, in other words, it is a repeated rising from death to life. Whether we rise to heaven or are reborn there, surely our life on earth is a prelude to the eternal harmonies afterward. It is sure also that we do not come back here. Who is not tired of fighting the tyrannies of the flesh, the passions and impulses of the senses that rise unceasingly like the tides of the sea? The imbecilities, infidelities, despairs, flaws in bodily life, make existence often a burden; yet, so long as flesh and blood remain, they shall remain in some form or other. This poor patchwork of carnal form is unfit for the glories of eternal promise. It is unfit even here, how much more hereafter? Therefore let no one think that flesh and blood, of which we are getting tired already, have any part in the kingdom of heaven. What, then, is to be understood by living an immortal life in God? A death and a rebirth, death to sin, rebirth in the Spirit. We have experience of death. Death is a process, not an act; a continuous change, a continuous unfolding. Not even does a

mustard seed die; dying and disappearing, it unfolds, produces a hundred-fold of its kind. The flesh is continually renewed, like a garment; the spirit is also renewed. The infant has died to, or outgrown fœtal life, the boy has died to infancy, the youth to boyhood, and so on to manhood and old age; and, though we should be wise to combine the excellences of all these conditions into the unity of perfect life, we should be unwise if we exchange what we have gained for what we have lost. We have lost perhaps in animal spirits, but gained in the spirit immortal. We have lost the world somewhat, but in losing we have gained it all the more, because we have gained both God and man.

When a man lives like a mere animal, the decline of bodily power is not recouped by the increase of spirituality; but we do not all of us live like animals. One Sakya-Muni dies calmly at eighty years of age with such words: "Be earnest, be thoughtful, be holy. Keep steadfast watch over your own hearts. He who holds fast to the laws of discipline and faints not, he shall cross the ocean of life and make an end of sorrow." Saint Paul, aged seventy, cast in prison, and ready to be

offered to the wild beasts at Rome, fearlessly exclaims: "My departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." One old man with such words on his dying lips proves the renewal of life in the uttermost verge of earthly decline. These souls were more alive in their so-called decline than rampant worldlings in the hey-day of their youth. They had habituated themselves to death by repeated self-denials,—their senses, their passions, their desires, entirely brought under the submission of God's holy will. The burden of Saint Paul's teachings is, Die to the flesh, die with Christ, and be raised with Christ to life. The dead need no longer fear death. They have experienced death, they are habituated in death. Die how, and to what? Die to the cravings of the flesh, to the temptations of the world, to self-interest, to the desire of honor, to the love of pleasure; die in self-sacrifice, unto the glory of God's righteousness. The endurance of pain, the practice of austerity, the hardship of devout life, form an essential part of this practice of death. We fear death so much that our par-

alyzed faculties fail to perceive there is a life beyond. The saints had practised death already, having died to their bodily cravings. Death was therefore shorn of its dangers, and with all their mind and heart they could contemplate the glory of the prospect on the other shore. There are two kinds of death, however,— violent unnatural death, and natural timely death. The suicide dies because he is tired of life, he hates life. The saint is not afraid to die, because he has already found a more joyous and more glorious life in the love of God. The fondness for life is so strong, so universal, that to hate it means to hate all the world; and death is the last act of disappointed selfishness. The love of God outgrows the common pleasures and hopes, as manhood outgrows the pursuits of infancy, as health outgrows the infirmities of disease, and shares in the delights of heaven before the earth has closed its scenes. Violent asceticism, therefore, and unnatural self-mortification is a dangerous practice. Self-sacrifice is always a means to an end, never an end in itself. So many have made it the goal of religious life that they have killed their lower nature without attaining the higher. Always beware of

this. By the death of carnal nature we mean the self-subjection that surely follows obedience to the will of God. The dealings of Providence crush every vestige of man's self-will. Few have the faith or the force or the self-denial to submit to them. When a man has schooled his nature in the sacrifice of self just as much as will enable him to accept the sufferings that are ordained through circumstances by God's loving wisdom, he has schooled himself to living death and the attainment of immortal life.

But, popularly, death means to cease to live. It is negative. Experience of immortal life is something positive. It does not mean cessation, but action. It does not mean death, but higher life. Higher or immortal life means living beyond self-interest; living the universal life, God-life; living in God as a divine being. We have acquired the experience, the insight, and the habit of living life immortal, living beyond the body, the life in God and with God. The first form of universal life is the life of the creation. Share consciously, unselfishly, in the great life of the universe; feel you are a spark in its central fires. All nature lives in you; the golden lamp of your life illumines all

that is around you, and reveals God's life in its universal form. The world is deathless,—dying at one point, reviving at another. The sum of life in nature never grows less. Nay, what is dead now soon bursts into life again. Nature's life and promise form a universal ecstasy. He who partakes of it forgets himself and feels he is immortal. Learn, therefore, to live in the rapt contemplation of nature. It is a sure foretaste of the glories of immortal life. Alas! the slavish love of mean pleasures blinds us to the immortal aspects of nature. It forces us to seek the continuation, and dread discontinuation, of what cannot possibly last. We become voluptuaries, cowards, and imbeciles at the same time. Not being able to help the loss of what we must lose, we try to avert our eyes from the prospect of the inevitable end, and are strangely indifferent to the only duty that remains,—of acquiring the higher, deathless life. Step out of yourselves, therefore, and enter into communion with the great universe around. Men need not think of death constantly; but they do need to live, that they may have part in and insight into the external existence that always courts their faith.

The second stage of universal life is to live in humanity. Patriots, philanthropists, and prophets, lovers of men in all forms, live for the welfare of others so completely, so ceaselessly, that, even in the fatal infirmities of life, their devotion to their fellow-men gives them unfailing strength. Living for one's own self is the certain way of adding to the natural fear of death, because, hide it as we may, the dissolution of life casts its shadow across our threshold at unexpected moments. On the other hand, humanity is undecaying and immortal. The children of God ever multiply. We may depart, but they live. Living for them, we live in them. Theodore Parker is said to have exclaimed in his last days, "There is one Theodore Parker that lies buried in Florence; there is another Theodore Parker that will live with the people of America." And we remember who it was that said, when death was very near, "Abide in me, and I in you." The energy and enthusiasm of the service of man, of the doing of good, steep me in unconsciousness whether I am sick or well, strong or weak, at home or in exile. I feel I live in universal humanity; and, though the flesh may fall to pieces, the

spirit is willing and strong. I am healthy in watching the health of others, happy in other's joy, vigorous in the strength of those I love, and fearless in the everlasting nature of the work I came to do. No man ever died who held his own happiness of little value before the happiness of God's children, and who lived that others may acquire a higher life.

When the soul communes with the Spirit of God, and when the intercourse is deep, for the time it transcends the limitations of the body and the influences of the world. I live in God. God is my life; and, inasmuch as God is immortal, the good are immortal. He lives most intensely who communes with God, but he lives the life of the spirit of the immortal. Often in this mood have I been perfectly unconscious of pain, poverty, and persecution; nay, the greater the trouble, the greater the exaltation. It was not the effort of the power of endurance,— no stoicism crushing the weakness and complaint of the flesh: it was the consolation of a higher peace, the healing of a higher love, the strength of the unspeakable companionship of God. The depth and intensity of this experience, I feel convinced, can grow upon a man to an unlimited

extent, till the fear and sting of death are completely gone. Absorption and ecstasy in the communion of God steadily cultivated will therefore disarm death, and give us insight into, and experience of, the nature of immortal life. Life, the highest life, is supportable upon other resources than those of the flesh and the world. There is peace, strength, health, hope, possible in God, and God alone. Strangers to that communion and companionship, when decay and dissolution are near we either fall back upon our feeble powers of self-mastery or faint and sink altogether. Steady devotional life, growing with age and infirmity, is the surest way to immortal life. Such, in short, is spiritual experience and insight into immortality. But nothing in life can give a full measure of what we are to be after death, and no faith or insight can completely solve the problem of mortality. Living in God, I find sometimes that insoluble problem nearly solved; the steps become clear, and the prospect full of light. Anon the gloom returns, and for a while all is darkness again. Yet every experience of immortal life slowly gathers and builds up a faith and hope, a vision which disarms the calamity of death and creates an impetuous expectancy of the life beyond.

PERSISTENCE.

The dead live: will the living die? The chemical activity of inorganic matter, the combination, fermentation, and dissolution into water, or gas, or new compounds that ceaselessly take place, is undeniably a process of life. Life with its facts, forces, and laws pervades the atmosphere, pervades the surface of the earth, making creation habitable to life. Unconscious in the objects that hold it and show it forth, it is a conscious purpose that finds its unity in higher orders of being, and is interpreted at last by the conscious intelligence and purposeful will of man. The activity in the midst of lifeless organisms is still greater. Silent, invisible, and intangible beings surround us. Living germs cover the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat; cover the skin that protects us, enter the pores that drain our bodily structure, and pervade our internal organs. And when we die, the dead body in its putrefaction, in its transmutation into the original elements from which it was made, becomes living forces, which feed the life germs that crowd into its interior and exterior. As soon as the living

organism expires, it becomes the home, the realm, of innumerable life, the food for uncounted organisms, the source of known and unknown forces, which enter into the inexhaustible life that dwells in nature. Living, we diffuse life: dying, we diffuse life. Dissolved, or disintegrated, or gasified, the posthumous process is the result of another order of life; living germs produce it, matter dead enters into new cycles of life. Neither force dies, nor matter dies; and, then, will the highest life,— the life of the mind, heart, and soul, the life that compels all other life,— life, conscious spiritual God-life,— will that alone die? The dead live: will the living die? The best, the wisest, and saintliest of the world,— where are they? If Christ is completely dead and gone, what gives the highest life to these millions of Christians? He still lives in his words, his deeds, his example. If speech can give immortality to those who are dead in sin, can the speaker die? If deeds inspire the immortality of well-doing in such as like me are wrong-doers almost by nature, in the very worst of sinners, can the doers die? If example is immortal, is the exemplar to be the victim of mortality? All reason, all justice, all truth, contradict

such a vile suspicion. One verse of Shakspere, or Dante, one sentiment of the Upanishads, makes the soul thrill with undying aspirations after glorious life in God. Therefore, they say the poets are immortal. Well they might be! But, if poetry never dies, is not the poet greater than his own verses? Behold, the dead are more immortal than the living. The latter live only for themselves: the former give life to the present and the future. Spiritual force is the highest force. Matter is only its slave and its form; and, if material force is persistent and imperishable, let none dare to say that spiritual force is the only victim of death. How can those who taught us immortal life be mortal? Yea, the immortals live with us in the depths of God. Saint Paul beheld Christ, and the faithful saw his likeness again and again. We, too, in our humble way, have met with the vision of the Son of Man in the very heart of our hearts. No, the dead are not so far away; nor is heaven entirely beyond our ken. The nearer we go to the beloved God, the nearer we go to our beloved on earth who have only preceded us where we shall all once more meet again.

REUNION IN HEAVEN.

Love never dies. When our beloved are lost we love them all the more; and we feel we have their love wherever and in whatsoever state they abide. The higher and purer our nature, the more immortal our love. We are more tender and reverent to the dead than to the living. And, if we love those whom we have lost, shall we lose those whom we love? If this love be from God, not from our selfishness or worldliness, it carries the proof of its own immortality. It would be the cruelest delusion to our hearts and consciences if this were not so, if the highest love and craving for union missed their objects. We heartily believe in mutual recognition and reunion in heaven. Heaven would be no heaven without our dear ones. But how are we to be reunited? Not, certainly, in the lower relations of the flesh and the world, but in the higher relations of spiritual nature. Reunion means recognition. It means spiritual recognition. When they were alive, did we recognise — if they live now, do we recognise — their spiritual nature? When we do not recognise our dear ones here, we shall not know them elsewhere. It

is not the carnal life, the carnal mind, the earthly union, or, at best, mental peculiarities, that make all the relations between ourselves and the objects of our love. Surely, much of that union dissolves when life dissolves; and with that dissolution goes also the possibility of recognising them in the state in which the spiritual nature is all in all. So long, therefore, as life lasts, the unceasing effort of the believers in immortality should be to recognise each other's spiritual nature, and make that the object of the highest and tenderest regard. For those who have no recognition of the spirit here, under so many favorable conditions, cannot expect to recognize each other in the strange land where bodily relations and earthly features disappear. And, without recognition how is union possible? Heaven will be no heaven to you, but a veritable hell, if, while on earth, you have failed to recognise its spiritual claims, and made yourself unfit to meet them. The immortals will not be your friends, but seem like enemies, if you neglect to be ruled in your conduct of life by them while here; your beloved in Paradise are not what you imagine: with your selfishness, vanity, impure-mindedness, you will never feel at home with them if you do

not try to be like them. It is only when you have lived up to the holiest rules of life, lived as an absolute sacrifice to God, that you can meet your God on that awful day. Learn to live as an immortal, know your dear ones and treat them as immortals, satisfy the demands of the good and true who have gone before, if you pray for reunion.

FIGURES OF THE IMMORTALS.

Surely, when we die, not only the whole of the body, but a great deal of what we call the mind, dissolves also. This is amply observable in the loss of memory and other mental powers in the very aged. Bodily death, as it approaches slowly, unmakes the man; and the immortal part of him has to be recast and remoulded after he has ceased to be on earth. What time, what ages that will take, no one knows. It is one of the things hidden in the depths of God's justice, wisdom, and love. But we know from experience that the regenerate and spiritually-minded not only make here their immortal life, but make their bodily life also, as the organ of the spirit. The powers of the soul recast, and reform, and rebuild the powers of the body, as well as all the instincts wherewith the

body is associated, till even the physical is exalted and turned into the spiritual. The senses, the sentiments, the instincts, the perceptions, are only a feeble instalment of the thousand other faculties which will burst upon the expectant spirit when the bonds of the flesh fall away at last. The activities, the aspirations, the developments, the maturities, all remain, though their fleshly garments are cast away. And I do say, from the devoutest faith and experience, that other forms, other senses, and other media shall be given, surpassing the earthly gifts as the powers of the full-grown man surpass those of the infant. I have known no spirit which did not take a form. Even the eternal Spirit of God has embodied itself and its blessed attributes in the varied forms of creation's glory. The universe is only the mind of God: humanity is only his figure. Why, then, shall we not maintain that the human spirit will also have a glorified form to carry out its aspiring activities and unfinished destinies in a better world? The few frail powers I possess are utterly unfit to give effect to the teeming spiritualities of my deepest being. My voice cannot exhaust the beatitudes of God's name,

though for more than half my life I have daily called upon him. Too feeble are these eyes to behold the marvellous self-revelations of the Eternal, and ears cannot measure the depths of his infinite harmony. For the greater part of my days have these hands served my Master; and, now that they are every day becoming feebler, the desire of serving him and his children overpowers me. Oh, I need a greater voice, visions of farther seeing, a greater capacity for the music of eternal truth! Oh, I need greater powers for God's worship and service! Very soon will these earthly activities end, while the life of the spirit approaches its perfection. At the very dawn of eternal life, behold, this body is like a broken tool. I need a higher form, higher powers, more abiding organs, to find my God. These surely will be given, whatever the nature, or the details of that form may be. I shall be glorified, and unite and mingle with my beloved ones who are glorified. I shall recognise them, and they will recognise me, and the bosom of God in heaven will be the home of our reunion. Greater than the joy which enraptures the born blind at the sudden unveiling of mid-day glory, greater than the wonder that trans-

ports the born deaf and mute when the sudden strains of divine music pour into their silent. souls, will be the light, rapture, and sense that animate the devout in their passage from life to immortality. We shall be transformed, glorified, enrobed in spiritual forms that have no property of carnal or earthly admixture. The whole structure of life here and hereafter is a unity; it ascends from the earth to the eternal spheres. We can catch but occasional and remote glimpses. The veil of death must remain dark and impenetrable, and on the other side there shall always lie mysteries that none dare attempt to unravel. But the light of faith, experience, and insight casts such transparencies on the darkness as to give unfailing assurance that those who live in God have the unutterable glory of immortal life.

HEAVEN AND HELL.

Every organism will always have an environment. Every spirit will have a form. We cannot think of a being without circumstances of some kind. The soul is the highest organism one can think of. The circumstances which environ it here in this world bring out its various possibili-

ties and give it concrete fulness. But that so-called fulness is always imperfect. Even he who achieves most feels disappointed when thinking how much more he could have done. Our doing here is never up to our aspiration because the environment overcomes us, circumstances are seldom favorable, and the powers we have are not sufficient for our purposes. If the soul is to have a continued existence after death, and if a separate existence, apart in consciousness from God and other immortals, the soul will have an abode where conditions of life help to complete its growth. That surrounding of new circumstances we may call heaven or hell. Heaven, therefore, or hell is not entirely subjective; but it is objective and external also. It is not wholly inside us, but outside also in the form of various conditions full of joy, sorrow, trial, tribulation, victory, according as we have deserved them.

The processes of God always conspire to save man from what is against his higher nature, — to save him from sin, from self, and what is called the temptations of life. These processes act through the medium of every man's life-events. Though, indeed, part of our circumstance is our

own making, part of it also — perhaps the larger part — is ordained by God. But, howsoever made, every man's circumstance is a help or a hindrance to him, — a help, if he can take advantage of it to carry out his destiny; a hindrance, if otherwise. It need not, however, be a hindrance to any at all. Because, if we knew how to use the things that surround us, they would always serve a wholesome end. All things good and bad serve together to do good to those who love God. Religious culture has for its object to teach us how the greatest ends could be secured through every kind of opportunity. The greatest end is to attain God, who is our heaven and our home. Unfortunately, we never fully learn this lesson. Everything that we dislike is a drag to us and a stumbling-block in the path of progress. The struggle with surroundings makes all our misery. The reconciliation with surroundings makes all our peace. And suffering is the invariable attribute of every conception of hell, while heaven is always looked upon as the abode of peace. We locate our suffering in the circumstance from which it arises, and dread it, and hate it, and try to avoid it. We forget that for those who have done wrong suffering is the only

means of doing better. We forget that every violated law will exact its retribution, that every obstinate disease will have its bitter treatment as the process of cure. Hell and heaven there must be, — like wealth and poverty, like health and illness, like darkness and light, like the inseparable contraries through which man's life must pass on towards its goal. Therefore, as a necessary environment, as a necessary corrective, as a discipline which cannot be avoided, there must be hell. It shall be outside us, independent of us, ordained for us, and inevitably to be gone through, in order that we may pass out to conditions of blessedness. And, similarly, there must be a heaven also, — outside us, independent of us, ordained for us, — that the organism of our spirit may find an abode better adapted and more favorable than it met here to accomplish its destiny, and that peace and progress may be united in the conscious love of God. What length of suffering there may be in the scene of retribution which is to come here on earth or elsewhere, who can say? Our conscious misdeeds, our violated instincts, our haunting remorses, our well-remembered self-defilements, our neglected opportunities haunt us always, like bloody ghastly spectres

claiming restitution, and demanding justice. The passions which burn all the more fiercely the more they are gratified, the resentments and jealousies that cry for vengeance as we grow impotent, the desires which consume like a fatal fever, the imagined wrongs that cannot be righted, the bitterness, losses, cruelties of life are fearful tormentors. The fears of the future, the despairs of the present, the memories of the past, are no mere dreams. They represent realities which will have to be met and dealt with; and their combination makes a state of life which can be expressed by no word better than by the hateful word "hell." On the other hand, the triumphs of righteousness, the sorrows of God's service, the self-sacrifices on the altar of humanity, the nameless yearnings of the saint and the nameless hopes of the devout, the promises of the Spirit and the inheritances of the past,—all combined and all fulfilled, can be expressed by no word better than the dear word "heaven." It has entered into no man's imagination what blessings the Great Father has reserved for them in heaven who are faithful to him on earth. Yet let us remember that heaven and hell are as much matters of this life as the life hereafter. The heavenly-

minded here discern the heaven they will get hereafter, and the wicked and evil-minded here have surely earned the hell which they dread. In the mansions of the blessed, where every holy aspiration meets with its response, and every blessed endeavor is given its reward; where the poor are exalted and the pure-minded see their God, and where the cruel separations of the world end in reunion; where the tyrannies of the flesh cease and the bonds of heredity are loosened; where wisdom and joy and love make the environment of the children of God,— who knows what happiness may be hoped for, who knows what the nature of unending progress there? But the sufferings of purgatory and the tranquillities of paradise are equally intended by God, our Deliverer, to lead us deeper and higher into spiritual communion and inseparable relationship with himself.


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CHAPTER XI.

THE SPIRIT IN REASON.

REASON is said to be the word of God. That, again, is the mind and thought of the Eternal,— nay, his very self. All men have reason, and all scriptures have in them their measure of the fulness of the mind of the Deity. But language and popular notion have it that in this reason there is a divine and a human side. On the mirror of the soul the depths of all the worlds are reflected. The universe of light and order is said to be within, not without. This marvellous creation is described as a subjective dream, the mystery of communion between divine and human reason,— *yoga-maia*,— in which the secrets of all things are hidden. "The sun does not shine there," says the Upanishad, "neither the moon nor the stars; what will these fires (of sacrifice) avail?" This is the spirit-land, whence reason brings the word of God. Spiritual reason is never metaphysical, but always practical and true, enlightening all things and

teaching all wisdom. Reason is the sacred highland whence religion and philosophy take their departure, and where ultimately they meet again to glorify God. The only original thing in the world is man's innermost nature,— his reason, his spirit, — because here the Eternal deals with him directly. Here man is truly interesting. Much else in him is mere vulgarity and repetition. The Indwelling Spirit has special revelations for thy innermost part: there retire. True revelation is deeper than sentiment, deeper than belief or intellect or conscience. Ever keep that sanctuary undefiled and open Godwards. Herein is oneness with God possible,— the oneness in which two become one, which, when it takes place, it proves all things, whether they be true or false, brief or lasting. The history of thought in all ages bears out that there is such a thing as godless reason, the incapacity of the intellect alone to master the origin and arcana of things. This tendency in some of the ablest of our race nothing can cure. Perhaps such a thing has its use. Negatively, it offers a delimitation of the provinces where intellect is sufficient and where it is not. When observation and analysis and reasoning have failed to satisfy

the spirit's longings and aspirations, surely these latter belong to the province of something else. We must trust, worship, depend, obey, and sacrifice. Whatever your reasoner may say to it, we know that herein we are acting reasonably. The realm of truth belongs to the sense of beauty, of goodness, love, moral character, devout trust, God's self-revelation. It belongs partly to the intellectual faculty also. The combination of all makes the wisdom of reason. Why should we take the intellect, which is a part, for the whole? Spiritual reason takes note of all fertile facts, in whatever part of life observable, and assimilates them into devout wisdom. Some thinkers of the nineteenth century have made a noble attempt to vindicate the Spirit's sovereignty in the realm of reason by reconstructing the laws of the universe and the laws of the soul on a common basis of unity, of continuity, of evolution of the manifested will of God. The great work of wisdom is to find wisdom in all things, and find out the likeness of the two reasons, divine and human. Is the reason in man essentially the same as reason in God, related but as part to the whole? In the one case it is pure, supreme, unchangeable; in the other case, warped and mixed

by grosser elements, but tending to be pure and transcendent also through spiritual culture. This is the question which the philosophy of religion has to answer. That the Spirit's glorious, eternal reason has its shrine in us, is linked with our nature, is more than half of us,—nay, nearly the whole of our being,—is not a matter of speculation or sentiment, or even faith; but it is an experience, a consciousness, which at last grows into an instinct, and cannot be shaken off. Religion is an instinct as much as affection or reasoning; but in man, unlike other animals, no instinct is a changeless finality, but always a potency; it grows, purifies, perfects itself, till it reaches its goal in God. The conceptions of cause and being, of self and not self, of beauty, right, and duty, of God and immortality, we did not make, nor can we entirely unmake, though it is our power to clear them or obscure them, neglect them or perfect them. They are the reason of God in us.

DEVOUT THOUGHT.

Exalted and inspired thought is the proper function of godly reason. Is the thought of God possible without a devout equilibrium of our faculties,

— nay, without the harmony of the senses and of the soul? Thought is to the spirit what breath is to the body,— the sweet result of the health of vital powers. What the heaven's blue is to the far-sighted eagle,— its element, its strength, its joy, its glory,— the thought of the Eternal is to the mind. As there is no object which the heavens do not encompass and fill, from the solar system to the dewdrop, so no object, no truth or beauty or spiritual secret is inaccessible to the vision of inspired thought. The sublimest function of reason is this devout contemplation. The process of creation is but the thinking aloud of God. Everything that is made was in him at first as thought. The realities of divine thought besiege us on every side within and without. And, as by contemplation alone we have insight into the profound depths of God, so through the same process everything flashes back to its originating thought, —"everything on earth is the shadow of something in heaven"; and this thought-world is God-world. All true thought is original, poetic, unworldly, and universal, because that whose function it is is a particle from the Universal Light. The truest thinkers agree and understand each other; the con-

ceited love to quarrel, compete, and assert their individuality. When men learn to think away what is local, bodily, or personal, or cruel, then only they learn to think, because the Divine Reason descends to make her abode in them. So long as the confusions of the world perplex them they brood, they plan, they calculate, are carried away by the streams and tendencies of things; they never rise to pure universal thought. The method and the result of thought is philosophy, the absorption of thought in its theme is communion, the tranquillity of thought is blessedness, the excitement of thought is inspiration. The divinest thought is nothing but the advent of the Great Spirit into man's reason, the contact of man with God; and, upon whatsoever he casts his eye in that state, he beholds the very bottom of it. This, in the Hindu's language, is *yoga*, communion with the saints, with God. It is in such moods that everlasting poetry is composed, that the laws of creation are detected, unities of force are realized, systems of philosophy form themselves in the mind. Nay, all the highest reaches of human nature on all possible things, all impulses, ideals, are thus obtained. Very few men *think* in this sense. We are reason-

ing machines, or believing machines, or working automata, or waterspouts of emotion,—seldom the children and worshippers of Supreme Reason. All reason is from him, all true thought is inspired by him; and the thinkers of the world are the masters of the world. Have true thoughts, therefore! Reason is not separate from, but a part of,—rather an effect of—righteousness and the fulness of heart and wisdom. Is not thought broken-winged when the conscience is hurt? Does not the whole nature grovel when the thought is wicked, or cruel, or vile? It is only when all is pure and sweet within that the mind is attuned to contemplation, that the sunlight of the great advent touches the faculties with calmness and stimulates them to united exercise. It is only when we have made our peace with ourselves and the whole world that we rise above self and the world. That peace may come after war, struggle, and death of the flesh; but it must be free from ill-will, spite, defiance, injustice. The loftiest thought is possible to the loftiest character.

What is spirituality without wisdom, and how is wisdom possible without some knowledge of the facts and laws of nature? Men of genius, by some

kind of inner light, come to possess this knowledge; that is, as much of it as suffices to enable them to do what they came for. To them the unity and integrity of soul make up the reasonableness which we have to acquire by studious application. The utter unreasonableness of some bigots is a conclusive proof that their loud claim to inspiration is a false cry. All inspired men are profoundly reasonable, and the reason and observation of mankind slowly grow into prophetic wisdom. Let us carefully observe and cultivate our wisdom, for nothing gives a diviner insight into the mind of the All-wise. The moods and habits, the thoughts and imaginations of that mind are impressed upon all things, great and small. The lineaments of that wonderful, glorious reason are traced now dimly, now distinctly, on the highlands and lowlands of creation, as the sublime outlines of the Himalayas are discernible amid great shrouds of mist, now partly concealed and now partly revealed. Even the self-concealment of the Spirit is a revelation, because it leads to a keener concentration of the seer's soul; and concentration is always the prelude to absorption. When so concentrated, so absorbed,— ay, so inspired,— rea-

son revolves the microcosm of its knowledge, what visions of universal law and order open out! A falling apple reveals the heart-secret of the universe. Whether you rear ants, or hive bees, or breed pigeons, or graft plants, or sweep the heavens with your lordly telescope, whenever you search for reason with reason, the communion of the two, conscious or unconscious, results in flashes and thunders amid which godly Science writes her decalogue.

According to the philosophy of the Hindus, intellect is not the same as reason. The lower animals have the senses, but no mind; the lower orders of men have the senses and the mind, but not much intellect; worldly men have the mind and the intellect, not much soul; the knower of God combines and controls all three — the senses, the mind, and the intellect — by reason in his soul. When the Spirit makes the soul his guest-chamber, reason incarnates in man, and all things lay open their depths, then true wisdom is revealed. "The vision of genius comes," says Emerson, "by renouncing the too officious activity of the understanding." Reason does not understand: it sees. That includes understanding. But understanding often excludes reason.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SPIRIT IN LOVE.

INTO that one mosaic of love how many jewelled rays of sentiment are artfully wrought, the most opposite blending in one wonderful light! There is reverence in love, affection mixed with awe, such as I used to feel for my stern yet noble father. It is different as felt for the mother, where that reverence is softened with a sense of incessant dependence,—a dependence as absolute as it is free. Whether it is the mother that hangs upon the child or the child upon the mother, it is not easy to say,—the child lordly, whimsical, wayward; the mother ministering to its every need, fancied as well as real. Mixed with reverence here, love is mixed with unutterable pity; as the strong feel for the weak, as the parents feel for the helpless babe. Now, seldom or never is love devoid of the instinctive kindness of sympathy in its composition. Between man and woman what an impenetrable mystery is the impulse of that same

love! The mutual appreciation and idolatrous praise, the helpfulness and mutual identity that make two persons really one, the never-to-be-exhausted poetry, the inebriate excitement, the force of attachment stronger than every other relation, stronger than every obstacle, as lasting and as long as life, — often lasting long, long after death! Love really seems like an inspiration from above: it cannot be defined. Then between friend and friend it takes another phase again. The open manly fellow-feeling, the pleasant sense of equality, not unmingled with quiet respect, secret admiration, and natural deference; the delight in spending money and time and energy for the benefit of the friend; the shrinking modesty at the slightest acknowledgment or expression of gratitude for what is received; and the undefinable sense of help and strength in the heart of the recipient when all this goodness is remembered, give us a relationship which is an honor to human nature. It is not generally thought that between master and servant, so sordid and mercenary has the relation become, anything which bears at all a likeness to personal love is possible. Loving, thoughtful service makes all the charm of calling God our

Master, our Lord. There are so few faithful affectionate servants because there are so few faithful and affectionate masters. Yet the attachment between him who serves and him who receives the service is a sacred, social, and domestic bond. It is full of respect, full of kindness; the sincerest wish to give pleasure on the part of one, and a gratitude, a fondness almost parental,—so intense, so true it is,—on the part of the other. Now, is all this complex love applicable to our relationship to the Supreme Spirit? We hold that it comes from him. He is in it, he is it; and in every one of its components this love, purified, may indeed be offered as a fitting worship to the God of love.

GOD IS LOVE.

Undoubtedly this is true. What we mean by love in its highest sense is nothing but himself. As love he is seen in various relations of life. The calm tranquil relations that form the groundwork of society, and bind all classes of men,—the rich to the poor, and the poor to each other,—are permeated by an unobtrusive love whose tides ebb and flow as they stand closer or farther apart. But the courtesies, the common obligations of life, the

respect that every man owes to his neighbor, the mutual dutifulness which is the bond of all organized society, are sweetened and cemented by an underflow of feeling easy to recognise as the love of man for man. When that feeling is not there, these social observances become hard, insincere, hypocritical, to not a few positively disgusting. When there is that feeling, a morning bow has the balm of a morning breeze, and the commonest civility becomes an acceptable worship. The love of man for man is the outcome of the love of God for man. The kindness of a glance, the pressure of a hand, an inquiry in illness, an acknowledgment of a favor,—all become instinct with an influence and a mysterious force. There is a secret divinity in it all. The genuine love of man is almost as sacred as the love of God, oftentimes harder to practise,—surely the stepping-stone to that higher love. The love of God is the best teacher of the service of social order. The inspiration of domestic tenderness, of public duty, patriotism, and philanthropy, is the love of God. No one goes through the common usages of life more pleasantly than he who is familiar with the ways of the Spirit. God abides among us

as the tranquil kindness of social and household life. If all these pleasant manners are not assumed, we are good to each other because the love of goodness, the love of God besets us unknown to ourselves. The exquisite relations of refined society bring this undercurrent of affectionateness into a higher and more prominent order. There is a wholesome shyness in us all which does not permit it to be confessed that men, if they are not deliberately wicked or cruel, love each other in the commonest intercourse. The introduction matures into acquaintance, the acquaintance into intimacy, the intimacy into friendship; and there is no limit how far man can be friend to man. The capacity of human love is infinite simply. Our intellect halts, our will fails: our love grasps everything. But if it goes no further than the stage of mere acquaintance, there is a calmness of mutual regard in it which, though somewhat distant, is not without its counterpart in spiritual culture.

LOVE'S FORCE.

So much foolishness, however, and so much gross carnality, is associated with the word "love" that there is a personal hesitation felt in taking it

up to appraise its spiritual value. We all know, nevertheless, what love is. Uncovered from its manifold wrappings of flesh and blood, of mere sentiment and self-interest, this love is a mighty force. The force of love in man's nature is a perfect mystery, and it is scarcely less wonderful in the nature of other animals. Birds flock at eventide, singing clamorously from the same tree, or fly across the crimsoned river at sunset. Buffaloes and elephants herd together, and fight in mutual defence; each grows thin and loses somewhat the relish of its fodder, unless they graze on the same pasture. What draws them? Why should one person be drawn to another without any motive of personal gain? Any reason, any motive, any thought of the usefulness of the object loved, any assignable cause, is utterly absent. If it were present, love would cease to be love. A blind force, an irresistible instinct, a hereditary impulse, an attraction for which there is no accounting, a strange yearning, compels men, women, all human beings, to fly to each other's arms, and, as it were, to flow into each other's being. Uncounted utilities, uncounted interests spring from it all; but in its source it springs from something to which the

thought or sense of interest or utility is a positive affront. The life of one becomes the life of another,— nay, more precious than life itself; the happiness of one becomes the ceaseless tireless life-long care of another. The excitement, joyousness, insight, resourcefulness, serviceableness, self-sacrifice, the delicacies, refinements, and sweetnesses which the presence of love calls forth, have been described and felt everywhere, every day, though it is all ever new. The greatest of the sons of men have said and proved by their lives and death that religion is nothing but love in its essence. The vilest of men have proved by their life and death that the shadow of love covers some of the ghastliest spectacles of crime and folly. Criminals have been turned into saints by its force; they have turned their bad instincts into divine aspirations. There is a very intimate likeness between life and love. One is as universal as the other,— as much a force, as little made by man, as indestructible, as full of infinite results. Only life is single, oftentimes selfish, confined within itself; whereas love is always relative, double, treble, manfold, possible only when it goes out itself, and consecrates, expends all it

possesses for others. As fire kindles fire, as light produces light, as a spark can burn a continent, so love begets love. How many thousands upon thousands can the same man love! Life without love is the meanest thing possible. Very likely it is impossible: every suicide is the effect of the absence of love. But love always includes life,— its own life and the life of others,— or, if it compels the sacrifice of life, it confers immortality as the reward of the sacrifice. Apart from individual and carnal relations, love is a tremendous, world-compelling power, like gravitation, like electricity, like vitality. This love of God and man has knit together millions of men, it has united the past and present. It is a force, it is a fact, it is a presence that fills all animated beings: it is the Spirit of God in man. The profoundest self-revelation of God is in the love of man for man. Like life-force, like every other force that is put into the hands of man for use, it is often converted into very wrong purposes, just as religion, sacrament, scripture, the authority of God, entrusted to the hands of man, are used sometimes for wrong purposes. Those who thus misuse expose themselves to unheard of penalties. Nothing on earth brings down such an awful suffering as misdirected love.

LOVE INEXHAUSTIBLE.

We have already said that all human love is in essence divine, though invariably mixed with the gross elements of flesh and blood. The elimination of this grossness forms the purpose and substance of spiritual and moral culture. Every religious or ethical system which excludes or narrows any of the numerous channels through which the divine love-currents flow from one to another deforms and narrows humanity, and in so far mars the prospect of its own acceptance. Every form of religion and morality which, in sanctioning human affections, sanctions the animalism which more or less underlies them, prepares for its future degeneracy and downfall. Only that blessed Dispensation of the Spirit which recognises and includes the infinite varieties of love, but lays down the disciplines by which each can be purified, sublimated, and turned into the divine essence which is their origin, solves the most complex problems of social and personal life. The highest and most unselfish love of which we have any knowledge is that which parents feel for their offspring. The mother's love is divine in all religions, whether it be the Ma-

donna, or the widow with an only child. Such love includes almost all features,—the sweetest, profoundest, and most lasting features of human relationship. The sense of identity and *ownness* is the characteristic of the parent's affection. Even when the estrangement of very contrary conduct has long separated the parent and child, and there has been mutual bitterness, like what David felt for Absalom, or the Prodigal's father in Christ's parable, misfortune or death to the child wrenches the deepest fibre of the heart; and the royal psalmist mourns for his degenerate son with as much pathos as for his own soul. The wills are different, the natures are different, the interests, the tastes, plans,—everything different. Whence, then, the sense of oneness, ownness, identity, which is so impossible to shake off? It is the involuntary affinity of nature to nature. The higher the nature the more abiding the instinct is, the less possible to shake it off. In the highest nature its intensity is unchangeable. The instinct in the ascending order of man's nature reveals that the abiding force in love is independent of personal reasons,—a universal force, a divine attribute, the presence of God. Though most narrow and definite in its range and operations, it is

very singular about this quality of love in man,— that all other powers of his nature are exhaustible beyond certain limits, but love is inexhaustible. Our energy, however great, soon finds its limit. So our endurance, knowledge, life itself ranges within its narrow boundaries. Is there any end to the objects one may love? The personal circle widens into the domestic, the domestic into the public, the public into the patriotic, that into the philanthropic, and philanthropy makes its home among all mankind. Our friends, in proportion as we are unselfish, tend to multiply; for love springs from the infinite depths stored in our being. The throb of sympathy thrills in us for the sorrow and wrong even of those whom we personally know not: the capacity for love has neither limit nor end. This universal heart in the individual, this infinite sympathy in the finite, the capacity for affection coextensive with the whole race,— nay, overflowing the shores of time and space, rushing into the land of the dead, into the past and future,— what is it but the heart of God beating in man, the Spirit's pulse throbbing in this vessel of clay wherein we are for a while? The warm and intense anxiety which those who love feel for each other indicates that

this anxiety has its counterpart in the One whose creation they all are: their mutual love is but a process by which God effects the preservation and happiness of the world. The higher the nature, the deeper its anxiety for others' good. Love is careful and anxious, not for itself, but for the beloved, heedless of all deserts. Is it possible for us to realize that divine love is anxious for our welfare amid all the trials and adversities through which we must travel, heedless whether we are worthy or not? Leaving all care for our own life in the Father's hands, the wisest course for us is to do our best,—to be faithful and loving in all our manifold duty to him. To be unanxious in every condition of earthly life is the great reward of the religious man, and this reward is only possible when he has faith enough to cast all his burdens upon his God. The type of this unanxious trust is exemplified in the infant on the mother's breast, and the mother's ever-wakeful solicitude in the unconscious acknowledgment of that trust. Darwin, in one of his books, makes a comical allusion to "the absurd" expression of happiness both in the calf and the human infant while sucking the mother's milk, with eyes upturned. Absurd or sober, this is a distinc-

tion in child-life; and the religious man has to ask himself what corresponding fact does it indicate in the relation of the soul to God? "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Often does the child of God feel and express an absurd happiness in trusting him. Unless there was deep truth in it, would the best and noblest of the world feel and act upon this dependence?

DIVINE SYMPATHY.

The sum of sympathy felt by man for man in the diverse relations of life forms the great heart of Eternal Love beating in the depth of humanity. God's heart is in every heart according to its nature and capacity. As every living thing is the receptacle of God-life, so every heart is the receptacle of God-love. For, as God is life, so God is love: both life and love are his force, his presence, his essence, his overshadowing soul in the secret places of our mind. The partnership which men bear in each other's feelings of joy and sorrow, in each other's burdens of anxiety and labor,— lovingly, tenderly borne by the meanest and least,— makes the unique principle of sympathy. This bond cements family life, social life, patriot-

ism, philanthropy, religious brotherhood,— in fact, every form of organized existence. The color and content of sympathy vary in richness as well as depth, according to the many relations which produce it. The aching expectant sympathy of parents for their offspring in the arduous struggles of life, in the acquisition of knowledge, of livelihood, of honor, worth, or righteousness, is not quite the same as the sympathy, the brotherliness of help which a friend heartily feels for a friend; and these are different again from the anxious, intense identity in success and ruin, in misery and exaltation, which the faithful wife feels in the fortunes of her devoted husband. The sympathy which Sakya-Muni felt in the agonies of all existent things, which Chaitanya felt in the godless fate of the millions around him, which Howard felt in the degradation of the prison population, Miss Nightingale in the sufferings of the wounded in war, Lincoln felt in the misery of the negro slave; the sympathy which one greater than all these felt in the fate of the fallen and lost,— adds only to the wonderful compassion in creation's cup from which all lovers of God and man have drunk age after age. "The sweet current of pri-

meval love," says the Persian poet, "still flows throughout the veins of nature: the nightingale mourns for the perished rose, and the winds are laden with the sighings of sympathy."

This vast common feeling for all and for each other, this generous heavenly wine, warms the best and noblest spirits of our race. Whence is it, or what but the nature of the Eternal poured out, that excites all animated objects,— nay, sparkles even in the inanimate, and turns the universe into the abode of God's love? Love is the greatest revelation of God's nature. He that loves most, loves best, has the best and most of God in him. Only, for the perfection of heavenly-mindedness that love must be free from every taint of self. Desire nothing, want nothing, expect no service, no gratitude, no return of any kind: love all, and feel rewarded by your own affection. That is how God loves. God means infinite sympathy,— the mother's sympathy and the father's, the friend's, life's faithfullest companion's, the giver's, the benefactor's,— the sum of sympathy in every sweet and lofty relation. God means the beaming smile of congratulation in good fortune, the kindred tear-drop shed in secret at genuine sorrow,

the helping hand at hard struggles, the gracious approval and welcome at anything well done when the odds are against the doer. It is God's love that makes the sunlight of the thousand forms of man's sympathy for man. Weeping in others' sorrow, exulting in others' joy are the two sacred privileges given to our race; and when the holiest among us have wept, the Spirit of God has wept with them; when they have smiled, the Spirit has smiled. Verily, the Spirit of God both weeps and smiles with man. Depend and trust in his sympathy.

THE SPIRIT IN BEAUTY.

It is a significant feature of love to behold always a beauty in its object. It brings its inherent beauty to bear on what it sees, just as hatred darkens things by its own inward deformity. The distinction between the handsome and the ugly is levelled by the mystic glamour of love, and the whole world, all circumstances, are made handsome. Whether the thing loved be really beautiful or not, love itself is so beautiful that it transfuses its own glory everywhere. It discovers unsuspected possibilities, it brings into relief latent advantages, it explains apparent difficulties,

it creates a new world, and peoples it with ideal excellences. Those who love are not discouraged by what they see in prospect of what they know will some day come to be. Hence faith and hope are the necessary attributes of love; hence the celebrated Pauline utterance,—"Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." To God, therefore, all things are beautiful,—if not in the present, certainly in the future. The present and future make no difference to him. What is the distance of the actual from the possible in the eye of Omniscience? To the lover of God all things are beautiful,—not as they are apart from him, but as they are in the divine conception and ultimate destiny. In the tiny ragged hedge-rose is involved the beauteous queen of the garden; the contemptible water-flower will some day bloom as the magnificent *Victoria regia*. The murderous highway robber is the incipient Valmiki; and Saul, the truculent persecuting bigot, develops into the prince of Christian apostles. It is not what we are that is glorious and beautiful, but what we shall be; and, when for a brief moment we strangely become our own future selves then God's love is realized. And

as we love God, also we love ourselves. God's love and ours becomes one love. We realize "God is love. He who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." When do we discover in ourselves our future destiny? In moments of the profoundest devotion, or heroic self-sacrifice, or triumphant conquest over temptation: in short, when Divine grace descends upon our head then God's love makes us beautiful. What, then, is the transcendent beauty of creation around us, from the starry heavens to the sparkling globe of dew on the grass-blade? It is the marvel of the beauty of God's love which our own heart discerns. What is the much more mysterious beauty of men's mutual relations which make the universe of humanity? Human love is the home with many mansions,— nay, not above, but here on earth,— where each, even the poorest and least, has a place. Who so contemptible that he has not found a home in his mother's heart, or in his wife's, or in his friend's, or in that of some kind, gracious soul, Christ-like in his regard for the poor? In spite of much that is cruel, this old wonderful world of ours is made hospitable and warm and beautiful by human love; and but few bid farewell to its familiar precincts

without a sigh. We love beauty most naturally, and in loving beauty we add to it. Spiritual beauty perfects the lineaments of nature and of man. God is Love, and God is Beauty.

"Learn, O student, the true wisdom of love! See yon bush aflame with roses, like the burning bush of Moses. Listen, and thou shalt hear, if thy soul is not deaf, how from it, soft and clear, speaks to thee the Lord Almighty. Take example of the roses, that live direct on dew and sunshine. They never question after Moses: why should you?" The piercing bird-notes call me to heaven, the home of God's love. The unseen breezes that sweep to the unknown bear messages and carry the soul on their wings to God. The mighty Himalayan summits, mysterious with their untrodden snow, call and invite me to God. The cataracts that fall on the hillside, rush away, give a parting call to the far-off Eternal; the voices of the night and morning, the voices of the blessed dead heard in scriptures, the voices of the beloved saints who have gone before us,—all call us in love; and there are harmonies beyond these, of which these are the echo. Through them all the love of God calls us to heaven, to himself. If there is a spark

of love in us, why do we tarry? Yes, in hearing and in doing all this, the fear of death is lost, the care of poverty and the sorrows of life all is lost. When in so many voices the love of God calls, who will not respond?

LOVE AND HOLINESS.

Love creates beauty, beauty creates love; and the two perpetuate one another. Who does not love the bloom of the spring, or the plumage of the bird, or the symmetry of the mountain pine, or the form and grace of Raphael's Madonna? I have seen the most uncouth and unclean hill cooly stick a bunch of delicate orchids in his greasy skull-cap, and in simple glee grin from ear to ear. The most ill-tempered and unmanageable of babies is stopped in its cries by an offer of the far-off evening moon. It is beauty that stirs love; it is love that quiets all innate savagery, and crowns the spirit with peace. Astonishing it is to think how the ministry of a flower is almost without the limit of time and space in the worship and offering of devotion. The devotee offers to his beloved God a flower, the youth to his beloved maiden; and the sorrowing nation to its dead hero offers the wreath of flowers.

Churches, oratories, and altars, festivals, marriages, and funerals are beautified with flowers. It is the tribute which love offers to excellence. Beauty is the golden link that binds affection to goodness, and its offer shall be universally acceptable. But what is the value of the beauty of form, or color, or motion, or order, all which is united in man, without the beauty of the spirit? It is only so far as the outer lineaments suggest the inner excellence that they are loved; and, when the conviction is final that the excellence is absent, the forms become a hideous mockery, like embellishing a corpse. The persons and portraits of heroes and saints will be tenderly honored, not because their bodies were finer objects than other men's, but because of the nobleness, saintliness, and spirituality that shone through them and made them beautiful. Socrates will be always more beautiful than Alcibiades, Seneca than Nero, Saint Paul than Festus, Cromwell than King Charles, because their presence might be mean or hard-featured, but their spirits were great. The nimbus that hallows the heads of the immortals is thrown out not by the sunlight or the atmosphere, but by the moral beauty from within; and we love it, we venerate it,—our

devoutest affections are forced from us. Thus beauty exacts love by its spirit-force, and is wedded to it. We love beauty, and therefore we perpetuate it. A beautiful and beloved model of the lotus flower or the human face, the structure of a stone pillar or the dome or spire of a temple, is reproduced ten thousand times on metals, gems, buildings, paintings, ornaments, until it becomes a symbol and type of perfection,—nay, until the accursed and unhallowed becomes beautiful and blessed, like the cross of Calvary. True beauty, both in natural things and in character, is ever loved and perpetuated for all time. It suggests the thought that somewhere, some day, in something, beauty, love, and permanence find a home. The loving are so seldom beauteous, the beautiful so often unlovely, we stand confounded in the disordered scenes before us, and lose all sense of the innate relationship. Amid the decline and passing away of the thousand forms of attachment; amid circumstances in which our love, like a storm-tossed bird, tries to find its nest,—tries and fails again and again; amid this ceaseless masquerade of ugliness as beauty, and violence as love,—these withering changes of disease, old age, and death,—the loud

wail arises and questions us, Where do love, beauty, and permanence dwell together? On the heights of the great Eternal, who treads through unsounded star-depths, the tranquil lustres of beauty shine fadeless from everlasting ages; the Spirit fills all he has made with the splendor of his beauty and love. Wonder swells in our hearts when we contemplate his loving beauty. Forms of beauty are knit together in the force of love. Nature seems to love us through her beauty, and then we learn to love her in all beautiful things. God creates beauty, he creates love: all things he creates in his own image; and, though their forms change, the beauty of the love remains ever enshrined in his eternal self-manifestations. The beauty of the universe shall never die, the beauty of character shall never die, the love of all this beauty shall never die, because God is perfect love and perfect beauty. In the endless expanse and duration of his being he stores and saves all love and beauty from perishing. The perfection of beauty and love in God becomes a conscious spiritual condition when the power of conscience purges the soul from all impurity. Both beauty and love perish and disappear in the hell-fire of sin. There

is no violence, no wickedness of cruelty, no filth of self-pollution, which the man of guilty conscience may not commit. The one great test of love is whether or not it constrains the conscience, compels the morality of self-sacrifice, purifies a man, stimulates renunciations, short of which test emotion means self-indulgence. Moral character means self-control. Love coincides with it there, but goes much further, and does not stop short of self-effacement, immolation of all selfishness at the altar of duty. But is not self-effacement a blank? When all the depths and heights of motive, the light and shade of impulse, all the opinions and experiences, desires and dislikes, aspirations and sorrows, that make up what is called a man's self, are crushed at one fell stroke of cruel sacrifice what remains behind? If self is gone, who reaps the harvests sown in tears and blood? The tyrant conscience remains, — the ruthless critic, who never gives rest one single moment, but accuses, hurts, exposes, ever the angel of vengeance who searches every hiding-place, and points to every spot of secret guilt. This second self, this higher self of conscience, has the whole realm of nature to itself when I withdraw from the government of my own

affairs. The rule of the heavenly kingdom begins when man abdicates himself. Conscience is immortal, universal, common to all mankind. When man dies, his conscience remains, and rules his whole world, becomes the law of conduct. Conscience is the very God in man. Love compels this conscience,—nay, becomes a new and higher conscience: the two combine into one, and that one lays down laws of conduct very far indeed from the agrecable self-satisfactory ways of the olden times. The sacrifice of self that love enforces is far indeed from the destruction of soul so often erroneously set down as the teaching of the doctrine of Nirvana. No orthodox Hinduism or Buddhism teaches that: it teaches the absorption of all that is noblest and divinest in every man's self into the higher principle of Universal Self that pervades the universe. The love of God recommends and enforces such acts, such motives, thoughts, and affections as all men—that is, the best and holiest among them—will love, and the gradual forsaking of such as are purely peculiar to one's self. Not only what is immoral, but what is exclusive, is forbidden to the spiritual man. The love of God lays down the basis of a more compre-

hensive life, to which humanity must return after its wanderings. It will repel men at first, by reason of their animality, but will surely raise them and unite them in the long run. With the humblest and devoutest reverence I ask, Can there be any conceivable self-renunciation deeper and more complete than that of the Supreme Spirit? He, the ever-blessed and holy God, places the forces and attributes of his being, his laws and orders, his beneficences, his providences, his sanctions and secrecies at the disposal of man, who uses them so often for the wickedest and vilest purposes. The hypocrites are not woe-begone, the Pharisees not apparently accursed. The libertines and persecutors are not crushed. But they triumphantly use the resources and orders of nature: they prosper, live, and die, as if there was no Moral Governor of the world. It is those who have very little of the world that find what little they have taken away from them: the poor are downtrodden, the mourner goes unconsoled, the friends and lovers of God are hounded to death. David prayed for the destruction of his enemies; but one much greater than David seemed, for the while, forsaken of God, — the helpless victim of his fierce enemies. Ap-

parently, God places the whole machinery of the physical and moral world at the disposal of such as dishonor him. In the ceaseless war between God and man the Eternal often surrenders all that belongs to him; Providence submits, truth is subdued, good is returned with evil. Yes, but only for a time, that in the end the Divine may shine all the more gloriously, and wickedness may voluntarily return the price of blood, and fall dead headlong in self-reproach. Our unrighteousness is all the more terrible because the righteous God submits his world to be stained by the blood of the innocent,— submits, though he could crush all evildoers in a moment. All submission, all surrender, sacrifice, renunciation, made in the name of God, will surely conquer in the end. Pride is never a power on the side of truth, but the lowliness of love is an unconquerable power. All spiritual history bears witness to that.

LOVE'S INSIGHT.

The insight of love is a familiar theme. True wisdom is the necessary effect of that insight. The knowledge of things and the laws which rule them results either from direct contact with their

operations or reasoning from certain predetermined principles established after sufficient observation and experiment. With the process we need not deal here. But is it necessary to say a great deal to point out that when love inspires the mind and kindles the eye, contact with the subjects of knowledge reveals much more, and goes much deeper than the mere unaided faculty of observation and reasoning? Without having the remotest wish to undervalue the operations of the intellect, one might truly say the lover of nature and the lover of man or of God will observe more, understand more, effect more, reason more to the purpose, than he who scorns to rely upon anything else than his bodily senses and his logical quickness. The minister to the mind has sometimes healed bodily ailments when the physician failed. The loving woman, as mother or as wife, knows human nature more than the self-complacent philosopher. Love is an organ of the intellect: with all its different qualities, the soul is a unity. So repeatedly, however, has the emotional pietist foolishly dishonored the office of intelligence that the natural reprisal has come. The scientific man, in his solid investigation after undeniable facts, has left on one side

faith and sentiment as so much womanish cant. But as surely does the love of man for God and the love of God for man open the exhaustless wealth of intelligence as the atmospheric currents open the cloud-depths into life-giving fertilizing showers of the summer. Philosophy is the daughter of inspiration, and the prophets of the world have laid the foundations of wisdom much deeper than the reach of modern doubt and nescience. After all, is it not the impulse of the love of beauty or fitness or vastness or combination that lies at the origin of the noblest creations of art? And it is the same impulse of love that lies at the origin of the universe and all the immensities of wisdom which it involves. Then what love has created love can comprehend; nothing else is fully competent. I have said before love coalesces with conscience: I say now love coalesces with reason; and holiness, wisdom, and love condense into the nature of God. In God reason and righteousness and grace form a unity: in man also they form a unity. Till God and man unite, human reason sickens into a demoniac possession that wants to displace the Deity from the world, righteousness hardens into a ruthless asceticism that tramples upon the ten-

derest sacraments of life, and love degenerates into a drivelling sentiment, or flatulent mysticism. But wherever any one of these qualities is born of reality it has a sure tendency to produce the other two; and hence, from the most humble beginnings, spiritual religion has ceaselessly contributed to the harmony of individual and national character. Out of the fulness of his love the Father has given us the lofty privilege of wisdom, the inheritance of the whole creation; and in all the light and glory of man's wisdom man shall offer unto his beneficent Creator the devoutest worship of his love. For worship is not complete or fitting till righteousness, love, and wisdom unite on the altar of human character unto the glory of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SPIRIT IN CONSCIENCE.

GOD incarnates himself in conscience. There is an inspiration of right conduct in every man, an insight into what is good and what is bad in the principles of character, the source of which is in the Spirit-presence within. The two overwhelming evidences that God *is* are the creation without and the moral law within. We have seen that creation means God's self-embodiment in outward nature, and the moral law means the same incarnation within us. The vague dreads and undeniable consolations of conscience have their reference to something *other* than ourselves, to the ever-watchful witness of *One* from whom, we suspect in spite of ourselves, nothing can be hidden. His presence stirs from within, and we tremble and become pale before its stern reality. A voice comes to us from above, from below, from all sides, yet we do not know from where, which decides not only the merit of acts, but feelings

and motives, and every part of our conduct. And very strange indeed it is that, though the voice is within ourselves, we have not the power of saying "Nay" to its decisions.

WHAT IS CONSCIENCE?

If conscience be a feeling,—a mere sense of joy or disgust,—or if it be a judgment, it cannot belong to an inanimate object surely, because an inanimate object cannot *feel:* it must belong to a living person, to whom high sentiments are possible. Such a living person is indeed not our own self, because this very self leads us to break the moral law. We do not fear our own self, we do not care for our own consolation; but a self other than our own, which somehow sits brooding in us, can only cause the reality of such emotions. Who, then, is that other self? "If," says Cardinal Newman, "upon doing wrong we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother; if on doing right we enjoy the same sunny serenity of mind, the same soothing, satisfactory delight, which follows on our receiving praise from a father,—we certainly have within us the image of some person unto whom our love

and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled and waste away." "In many instances have I found," says Keshub, "there is a person within the person, there is a tongue within the tongue; and they talk in different voices, and the voices can be distinguished by the trained ear. There is a Thou within the I, and the two are separate." This second person is the incarnated word of God in our moral sense, and this word is the law of life. The Spirit of God is the law of life for man. This law every one breaks more or less often, but none may outgrow. Its warning always hangs over the head. Amid the wild pleasures of youth and wealth there is an undertone of threat faintly heard, which may be drowned or defied, but will surely return. Amid all the complaisance of keeping the civic or social law there is the sense of an unsatisfied, inexorable higher law, which never gives rest till it has exacted its uttermost due. But no mere law is at all times binding or real till it is referable to the nature, authority, and personality of some one who holds us accountable, and in his character exemplifies

what he administers. The moral law, then, is the will, power, and personality of God embodied in our mind. Our irresistible instincts bear testimony that the presence and Spirit of God executes upon us his judgments. The image of God is seldom kept pure in any one of us, and is never given in perfection to any. Our surroundings greatly affect it. Conscience, like reason or faith, is to be educated. The lives of great men, the influences of religion, the trials of life, heighten our moral faculty. The Spirit of God's righteousness pours in larger or lesser measures into us, according as we make ourselves fit to receive him. Incarnated in us, his authority becomes more inviolable as we ourselves become more advanced. Every man's conscience may be a law unto him, but it shall not be a law unto others. Nay, there are times when individual conscience has to be sacrificed to a higher conscience. God demands of us the highest plane of life, whether we ourselves find it or others show it to us,— not only an intenser, but another kind of life,— a universal life, which all men shall honor. Here individual and universal conscience is reconciled, and God's will alone is the law of holiness. An attainment of

unearthly purity is demanded. The world-compelling men bring it, and force it upon us in spite of ourselves. They, for instance, demand a sacrifice of all self-indulgence, even of the commonest needs and satisfactions. They demand forms of duty against which our nature rebels, a self-inflicted misery almost inhuman in its arbitrariness and rigor. Yet, apparently severe as such demands are, the soul, in its upward look, meekly admits the justice of the claim, and bows before the awful throne. Moral aspirations once thoroughly awakened have not their satisfaction here. No, nothing that we can achieve slakes the eternal thirst of the spirit; but the slightest breach of these transcendental impulses creates a dark, foreboding shadow of evil, which strikes the heart almost dead in its guilt and shame. The higher and holier a man is, the profounder and more unspeakable his sorrow amid the spectacle of moral evil. Who says, then, there is no advancement in the moral world? The accomplished ideal of every great and holy life adds to the requirements, to the difficulties, and to the authority of the moral law. The formation of the character of mankind advances by great stages, and the lives of the

founders indicate those stages. Marvellous is the authority of this unwritten word of God. It is said that "the wicked flee when none pursueth." Why flee? Flee from what? Why not keep the wickedness quiet, and be done with it forever? Nay, there is no quiet while the Authority outraged haunts the mind with a vague and deep anxiety, a dim misgiving that refuses to be shaken off. Sophistry may silence criticism, frivolities may disarm men's discsteem; but what can give assurance to the nameless palpitations of thine own heart? Thou canst never shut the door to thyself.

CONSCIENCE UNIVERSAL.

Thus our moral consciousness is but the organ of a Presence,—a mouth-piece of an Authority which we are bound to report to ourselves, if not to others. In a vast measure the Spirit forces our moral faculty as he forces other faculties, both of knowledge and feeling, to recognise the fact that he dwells in us, directs us, holds us firmly in his grasp; and we can never go far from his presence, even though we would. All this becomes the more awful when that Presence is voiced by the innermost experience of whole races and the weird,

unearthly accents of prophecy. The mystic teachings of the ancients, for whom reverence is universal, only makes the teachings of our own heart more authoritative. It shows the highest moral life has a unity and universality in it, which is a sure sign that it is the life of the Eternal himself, and he is in us. The unity of purpose in nature, the unity of life in animals, the unity of intuitions in minds, is not more striking than the unity of moral instincts in mankind. Despite the petty divergences of the moral codes of nations in the value of particular acts under particular circumstances, at the bottom of the relations between man and man, between man and woman, in the active principles of human character, there is the unchangeable rock of natural morality. This means the presence, the guidance, and the identity of Him who keeps the nations together. The wicked man is felt to be the enemy of the whole race. He has his home nowhere; and, however he may hide the blackness of his heart, even the unseeing savage finds him out erelong. Before the baleful figure of human misdeed, health and happiness, religion and ritual, earth and all its promises, stand dumb. The consolations of phi-

losophy, the pleasures of possession, are helpless vanities when at last the retribution of wickedness has overtaken you. When the Law of Life is violated, man is smitten with living death; and can the dead enjoy? Before the sunrise of the excellence of holiness the humblest and the heart-broken stand rejoicing. Righteousness exalteth a nation and anointeth with gladness the children of men. The pure in heart are also the joyous in heart; and, when man keepeth faith with the word of God, he also keepeth his covenant with his faithful. So that those who overcome wickedness are crowned with peace and rest, both here and hereafter. The fundamental unity of moral life creates the hope of a world-wide brotherhood, makes up the reality of an endless progress, and establishes the throne of the kingdom of righteousness in the very centre of human nature. The Spirit is present with all his peoples: the Jew and the Gentile are alike under his rule; and, inasmuch as they consciously honor and obey the expressed commandment of Him who dwells in and rules their hearts, they cannot but have some sympathy for each other.

MORALITY AND HOLINESS.

Morality and holiness are only the lower and higher levels of the same principle,— in kind the same thing, but exceedingly different in degree. Holiness is the self-revelation of divine sanctity superadded to conscientious, faithful living. Holiness is intense and tender love to God and man superadded to moral character. There may be conscientious without holy living. Unholiness, or sin, is living in opposition to the law of moral faithfulness which our sense is obliged to admit, if not to follow. There is in us the law of animal life, the law of worldly social life, and the law of spiritual life, rising one above another,— oftentimes the higher merging in the lower, sometimes the lower merging in the higher. There is no necessary antagonism in them: the antagonism is our own making. We make it when we wilfully violate the higher for the sake of gratifying the lower. This is sin; and we are its authors, not God. When, by faith or grace or divine command, or all three united in the strong aspiration after holy life, we begin to live always, and in every detail according to the law of the Spirit which we, as religious men, un-

doubtedly recognize, we begin the life of regeneration. This is the life of the saved, the life of the sons of God. It comes early or late,— oftentimes late, long after the life of reason or of sentiment or of worship, or of what is commonly called the correct moral life.

Morality is associated with a coldness, harshness, isolation. Holiness is warm, tender, and sympathetic. The exceedingly moral man repels by his self-centred rigor and unlikeness to all ordinary mortals. The man of holiness attracts all, mixes with all, spreads himself among all, so that even the vile and wicked love him, and are thus converted. The man of austere morality is obliged to be self-conscious, oftentimes somewhat arrogant. He blesses God that he is not like other men. The man of deep holiness is the man of repentance also,— sad at the inevitable contrast between himself and his ideal. Because, in the inspiration of goodness, the more he sees the marvellous good in all men, the humbler his estimate of himself.

ASCENT IN HOLINESS.

We sometimes hear men speak of the ideal of holiness. To us the moral idea does not mean the

imaginary, or the speculative, or the abstract,—a mere poetic fancy, void of any personal value. The ideal is the Infinitely Real, who abides in every man's moral sense, and compels him to live according to rules that repeatedly affect the powers of his body and not a few desires of his social and domestic life. It must be conceded that the moral ideal is not equally high or clear or full in all men, or to the same man at different times of his life. It waxes or wanes according to the moods and tenses of the mind. It becomes an overwhelming impulse now, or a cold judgment of the intellect next time; it becomes a madness and fury at one moment, or faints and subsides, and seems not to leave a trace in the besetting darkness. But it is not therefore gone. As soon as, in as much as, a man outgrows the grossly animal life, he is dominated by this inevitable ideal. When this ceases to have any influence over him, he becomes a mere machine; but it never does cease. It is in each one of us as a part of our nature: it is the Spirit and word of God in us. Here comes the supreme need of devotions. Prayer restores the lost ideal, repairs the broken vision, renews the spirit to behold the unchanging face within.

Doubt and weakness and sin, and the hundred wearinesses of the world, mar the brightness of our eye and the peace of our spirit; but we never entirely lose the priceless possession of God's holy inner presence, the guidance of the great destiny that leads us on and on. Unless we deliberately forsake the practices and associations which have in thousand instances saved our failing morals, we are not forsaken,— no, not even then entirely. Absolutely lost to all moral influences no man ever was or can be. But can any one be absolutely good? Indeed, character incessantly tends to a finality. How far evil and how far good a man can become we have yet no conception. Yet from the lowest depth of wickedness a man or a woman is found to emerge with a startling suddenness, which opens a strange perspective of possibilities. This may be called salvation, if you will; and the faith and experience it begets make a tremendous force. But the law of personal holiness is a law of tardy operation. No one can attain to innermost sanctity by a sudden plunge. He must reap as he has sown; his evil deeds must execute a retribution upon him unknown to any one but himself and the great, awful Witness within. It is enough if he

will in the future abstain from all conscious defilement. Salvation from sin never yet meant salvation from punishment: it means growing deliverance from the possibilities of further sin, but the deliverance comes through great suffering. Sin is the punishment of sin. The recurrence of sinful thought or wish is the worst misery that can happen to a godly man who hates sin. But this punishment, which we would fain avoid, is a powerful factor in bringing about the deliverance we seek. The more we hate and dread sin, the more we struggle to avoid it and the nearer we are to the mansions of holiness. The more we practise purity in defiance of ourselves, the nearer we are to God. But it is a fearful penal reformatory work. He upon whom the dreadful justice of God has been executed, not in vengeance, but in the light and wisdom of edifying love,—he will take reasonable care not to offend that justice again. He who cheaply escapes the penalty undervalues the pardon. The forgiveness of sinners is a mystery of Divine Love which scarcely acts in two cases alike. It means dreadful suffering to one: it means the prodigal's easy return and reception to another. But, whatever the measure of suffering,

adapted as that always is to the nature of the sufferer, its inevitable effect is to heal wickedness and bring the rest of the righteous. Yet let no one think that suffering is enough to cure evil. Thousands suffer, but are all the more hardened by their punishment. The Son of Man and the impenitent thief were nailed side by side, and died on the same cross. The suffering of one regenerated the world, while it sealed the doom of the other. It is the graciousness of God's love that saves and confers sanctity, while the well-merited suffering sets forth the value and sweetens the taste of that love. The Spirit of God grows in the conscience as the sense of holiness intensifies, as he fills the heart with godly love or the reason with divine wisdom. But neither wisdom, nor love, nor sanctity finds its perfection within any one in a day. As we wax in spirituality, we grow in these beatitudes. Let us fulfil at least the negative condition: let us cease to be guilty of conscious wickedness; let us walk not according to the lusts of the flesh, but according to the impulses of the Spirit of God who abides in the heart. The possibility of evil none may take away from man, because evil grows not only from the defective moral

faculty, but from heredity, from prejudice, passion, ignorance — nay, even from the overwork of what is good. But every possibility of sin overcome through spiritual struggles, by the help of the indwelling Spirit, makes righteousness more actual; and every temptation tends to crown our victory. In the face of the awful judgments of God daily executed, how can any one forget that he is a miserable sinner. In the glowing consciousness of divine forgiveness, and the daily influx of devotional sanctity how can any one deny that he is near, ever nearer, to the land of glory?



CHAPTER XIV.

THE SPIRIT IN CHRIST.

THE ideal becomes real in us at detached moments, seldom continuously. In those moments we are divine, we are our higher selves. The Eternal embodies himself in us for the while. Very soon fleshly impulses darken our nature; and the ideal looms in the distance, abstract, cloudy, spectral, sometimes disappearing from view altogether, like the furthest snow of the Himalayas. Suddenly it is recalled by a look, by a mountain summit, by a morning sunlight, by an illness or sorrow. The object of all spiritual culture is to plant ourselves permanently on the highest plane of moral aspiration, to become forever what we wish to have been. We need for this examples; we need those men who have achieved what we have not,—the eminence of living up to the lofty vision of their souls. Unless the possible becomes actual, moral aspiration is a perpetual agony. The judgments of the conscience are often admixed

with worldly interests and lower motives. Very few of us, indeed, can solely depend upon ourselves in our course toward perfection. We need an independent objective to verify our impulses, and the great, godlike men give us that objective. We see the best and highest of ourselves in them.

The intuitions of the Divine in our hearts profoundly recognise their counterpart in some men we come across, either in history, or in our experiences of life. It is impossible to be devoid of sympathy for the great and good, because these are, in fact, ourselves; that is to say, the embodiment and reality of what is noblest and best in us, that which we cannot make ourselves even if we would. All the impulses and strong wishes for moral or spiritual life we feel, and to which, somehow or other, we fail to give effect, become proved realities in these superior beings. The mind of God, faintly shadowed in our hearts, kindles into a sort of supernatural light in them. This light we did not make, we cannot quench. It illumines our path far before and behind. They become divine men; their presence and their life strike us as not of the earth. Not a few fall down and worship them as gods.

The wisdom of Greece took shape in a Socrates, the stoicism of Rome in a Seneca, the asceticism and self-conquest of India in a Sakya-Muni, or its insight in a Krishna, the Chinese sense of duty in a Confucius, the Arab energy of faith in a Mohammed. So long as these men continue to represent our moral and spiritual impulses, none can depose them, none can remove them. Each is a principle of humanity, each a phase of the divine reason, each is a spiritual principle personified. The more you foolishly denounce them, the greater the faith and enthusiasm they will arouse in men,—nay, in the majority of mankind. It is as natural to have faith and reverence in the character of prophets as to have faith and reverence in God. Our faith in the former is more concrete. Very few can fully trust in God without trusting in man. If the incarnations of God, as popularly understood, were abolished, popular religion would be gone from the greater portion of our race, and men would be left to grope in the darkness of speculative abstractions, like the Athenians after an "Unknown God," without any definite conviction on the great questions of eternal interest. The presence, personality, and attributes of God

are thus borne testimony to in a manner that cannot be mistaken by the religious nature of the great masses of mankind. Indeed, "God has not left himself without witnesses," without representatives. Such are the very best of the earth,—men who are sent in the double capacity of representing both God and man,—they being human in the highest and divinest sense, and divine in the most intelligible sense. They represent man in his aspirations and possible achievements; they represent God in all his accessible perfections. But these incarnations are generally one-sided: they stand for certain isolated principles of God's nature, and hence become unacceptable to mankind as a whole. The prophets of one country are not the prophets of another; the incarnations of one age are supplanted by those of another: they are partial, local, imperfect, bounded by time, nationality, and circumstance. Socrates is for the Greeks, Moses for the Hebrews, Confucius for the Chinese, Krishna for the Hindus, and Mohammed for the Musalmans. These will never be accepted by all the world; as everlasting models, they will not be acknowledged by all men. The need of man is for a central figure, a universal model, one

who includes in himself all these various embodiments of God's self-manifestation. The need of man is for an incarnation in whom all other incarnations will be completed. Such an incarnation was Christ. In Abraham and before Abraham, in Socrates, and in all the great and good ever reverenced in humanity, was Jesus Christ in spirit. His essential nature is in the greatest and best of the race: we look upon him as the type of humanity. He was as no other man ever was or shall be: this is his uniqueness. Christ is unique, not because his flesh was born of a virgin, but because he was the unity of all those who had preceded him in the divine order of humanity. His spirit, his being, was the immaculate and unexampled conception of the Supreme Virginity in God. Christ, indeed, had a virgin mother, in a spiritual sense; but that mother was not Mary, Joseph's wedded wife, but the mysterious Maternity whereof all this fair universe and all this fair humanity is born. The prophets of the world cannot be reconciled with each other: their followers fight over them. One represented wisdom, another compassion, a third energy, a fourth conscience, or self-consecration, or faith, or love. But wisdom, faith, love,

and holiness all found their reconciliation in adequate measure in Jesus Christ. Every one professing to be a prophet must be intensely human, exceedingly natural. To be natural is not to be carnal, but to be what men are sure to long to be, if not now, at some distant time. To have an undoubting fore-knowledge, an instinctive anticipation of what humanity must grow into, and to have the courage and strength and success to be that, makes the originality of the prophet's character. A national leader always antedates his nation, and God predestines the people in the person of their leader. The divine foresight pours itself forth into him. He becomes an incarnation of God's purpose, God's wisdom and force. But divine humanity is such a vast total, God is such an inconceivable aggregate of qualities, that men, even the most perfect men, become at best but broken lights of his glory. What is worse, the fragmentary lights cross and contradict each other. So long as our quarrels about the incarnations of God are not made up, quarrels about religions will not be made up, and theological hatred will bring all theology into contempt. Our belief is that Christ is unique because in him the unity of all

these different shapes of divine excellence was first effected. Therefore we call him the Son of Man, and the history of the Christian religion is the history of the progress of humanity. Some day, if not now, it will be the pride of the followers of Christ to realize that he does not supplant or abolish the prophets and incarnations of other religions, but that they all and each have their place in him, that he completes and reconciles them. He is the type of all humanity. Humanity broken up before and after is bound up in him, so that he is the human centre and bond of union in the religious organizations of mankind. When will Christian ministers turn their love of Christ into the love of the good and holy men of all religions, instead of holding him up as a standard of hostility which will never end? When will they cease to imitate the quarrelsome sectaries who feel that honor to their respective prophets must be purchased at the price of dishonor to all others? Alas, what God meant to be all-inclusive they have made all-exclusive!

In the next place, Christ is unique because he perfectly embodies the true and universal relation between God and man: the Father and Son is the

true relation between God and Man. The great question is, "How shall we behave and live toward God?" Different prophets have established different ideals. Indeed, it cannot be said that before Christ nobody thought of God as the Father. Not to speak of other religions, the Hebrew scripture, from which Jesus quoted so often, repeatedly addressed him as, "Now, O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the clay, thou art the potter, and we all are the work of thy hands." "In the image of God made he man." Christ not only taught us to call God "Our Father," but he has shown, as none other before him, how to behave unto God as the Son. He taught us to be the sons of God. In *all* things did Jesus, so far as the times permitted, conform himself to the mind of God; that is, to be the son of God. Not in opinion merely, not in sentiment, nor in mere moral principles, but in all details of every-day life, in all difficulties, sorrows, and temptations, in all calls of duty, great or small, to be, to will, and to do as the Father would we should,—that is sonship. When, with the inherent weakness and unwillingness of man, in spite of circumstances and examples all the other way,—when he is able to do this, the whole mind

of the Father is manifested in the Son. He is embodied as the image of the Spirit of God. We exclaim, with John, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." God and man became one, not in transcendental idealism, but in actual visible reality. Such was Christ.

That this is no mere dream has been evidenced by the events of two thousand years,— events not legendary, but able to stand the scrutiny of modern historical tests. How many orders of civilization, how many ideals of life, what wonderful revivals of literature, art, and science, what infinite prospects of improvement in everything have sprung from the root of Christ's character and example! How many principalities, empires, communities, organizations, and churches have been founded on it! Is it not unique that twenty centuries, instead of being able to exhaust this single personality, should add more and more to its affluence, till at the present moment we stand wondering if there will be any end to the Divine Humanity which thus feeds and fills the world? It is the parable of the five loaves and fishes again applied to the

needs of the community of all mankind, the fragments gathered able to feed many more than those who have feasted already. . .

This apparent transcendence of the limits of time and space invests the central figure of Christ with a universality which has to be recognised even by those who decline to accept his religion. This universality, again, has led so many to ascribe unto him the eternity and infinitude of the Godhead. The result of this is that the infinite and eternal God, the veriest Supreme, has been overlooked, and made of little practical avail in the boundless enthusiasm of worshipping the Son of Man. There are two opposite extremes of painful error in the matter of Christ's personality among religious men. The first undervalues the revelation of God in man, rejects the all-important truth of incarnation, ridicules and censures our great reverence and faith in Christ, and would lead us back, if not to utter heathenish darkness, at best to vague Hebrew aspirations or Vedantic speculations about the nature of the Deity. The second extreme, in order to emphasize the definite self-revelation of God in humanity, must force upon him the abdication

of all the supremacy of infinitude on behalf of the Divine Man. However impossible it may be to conceive two parallel infinitudes, let us ask, What is the practical benefit? When the human infinitude of the Son absorbs all our personal love, loyalty, and devout aspiration, are not all the purposes of worship, all impulses of spiritual life fulfilled? The abstract infinite — call it the Deity, the Father, the Spirit, the Brahma — left behind may perhaps round out our theology, and offer us a stronghold to retire on philosophical emergencies; but its spiritual worth is doubtful, and can be dispensed with. When Christ is found to contain infinite and eternal perfection, we need none other; and any allegiance to the unconditioned abstract Deity becomes an act of the merest supererogation. Declare openly that Christ is all in all, that the absolute Godhead is included and exhausted in him, and let the so-called Supreme Being of the Theist retire forever from the arena of practical and personal religion, or, like us, declare that God is all in all, that Christ is his spiritual manifestation only as the type ever growing into perfection. So far as God's nature and relation could be shown within the

limits of finite humanity, at a distant age and in imperfect human society Christ showed it. Christ is an evolution from the transcendent state of the undifferentiated consciousness of God. From the mystic depths of the Father's eternal reason the Son sprang into personality as a fitting consummation here on earth of created things, in the fulness of time becoming flesh. Greater and greater has Christ grown as the ages have grown, as humanity has grown; and greater still shall he be in the incalculable harmonies of the future. As with the ever-growing self-revelation of God in man new depths of human nature open out, so new glories of the Divine Sonship shall unfold themselves, all from the deathless Christ-seed sown in our souls, watered by the blood and tears of Calvary, and by the blood and tears of countless martyrs. History lays down the beginning, spirituality reveals the eternal greatness and progress of this Christ-life. But the everlasting greatness of Divine Humanity is not an arbitrary infinitude, a coeternal personality that makes two infinities; two eternals, two Gods, thus producing hopeless perplexities in worship, in moral allegiance, and the instincts of godly reason. "My Father is

greater than I!" Jesus exclaimed: the greater originates the less, includes the less, absorbs the less.

It is stated sometimes that the infinite perfection of the love of the Father necessitates an infinite object for its satisfaction, and that object is Christ. The moral necessity of the infinite makes another infinite unavoidable. But, as soon as the latter infinite is *made*, it ceases to be infinite; and, if the two infinites are uncreate and run parallel like two geometrical lines, they never meet and become one: they are independent. Independent beings never wholly submit to one another. What, then, becomes of the dependence, love, trust, and oneness which make the very essence of Christ's nature, without which he would cease to teach us anything? Nor is this all. God makes nothing unnecessarily. If the presence and personality of the Son offered infinite satisfaction to the love and other attributes of the Eternal One, what necessity for further objects is left behind? The whole creation, with its marvels of love and intelligence, becomes a pure redundancy. The Father and Son would be perfectly sufficient for each other. And all spirits, all angels, all

worlds, all men, all progressive lives, would be mere interlopers, who came only to disturb the infinite adaptation of the two. God creates us because he needs us, because he loves us, because we are necessities in the economy of his nature; and the divine humanity of Christ only crowns this marvellous structure of man. The indispensable necessity for Christ is the necessity for the creation of all things, the evolution and progress of all things, the perfection of things from the imperfect.

If Jesus Christ is to be taken as the consummation of all the great beings who came before him, are we to think that there is no necessity for any to be sent afterwards? Christ without his apostles would be an insufficient centre, a centre without a circumference. The Sermon on the Mount without the Pauline Epistles would present an incomplete construction. If this be so in the foundation of Christian society, it is much more so in the history of religious society elsewhere. As the greatness, goodness, and spirituality of those who went before were built up in Christ, so the sum of his being and character has been resolved into component figures, into particular virtues, each separately

embodied in several teachers, prophets, ministers, according to the needs of the times, communities, and generations. The word of God was in those who went before and in those who went after, Christ standing as the central figure between the ascending and descending series, filling all, enlightening all, the light of every man that comes to the world. Christ analyzed would be found to be the essence of spirituality of each of all these glorious beings, each more or less Christ-like in proportion as the harmony of human character, the harmony of wisdom, love, and holiness, was more or less embodied in them. There shall be many sons of God, many prophets, teachers, and ministers, Christ-like men. The succession of divine humanity shall never cease; but no son of man shall ever be greater than Jesus, and no name as his name,—every knee shall bow to him. The past prefigured him, the future shall illustrate him, from him the present shall draw its inspiration. They talk of the second coming of Christ, and wait for the destruction of the world in that hope. The world does not hold out a prospect of speedy annihilation; but of steady progress and prosperity; and if Christ's second advent is to take place, he

shall come as the expected guest of the world's bridal chamber, not the avenging angel of its graveyard. Yea, we maintain that he has come already, not once, not twice, but repeatedly, in the shape of his servants and faithful representatives, who have loved like him, suffered like him, served like him, devoted, consecrated, martyred. According to this law, every minister is a Christ unto his congregation, every father a Christ to his family, every prophet a Christ to his people: Christ pervades humanity. Like unto the deluded Jews, who expected the promised Messiah should descend in regal splendor, with trumpets sounding and shouts of victory rending the air, not a few in the modern world wait to see the sun and moon turn into blood and the kingdoms of the world crashing into atoms when Christ, the King of Glory, shall come to judge the world. Our carnal faith invests itself in the insignia of earthly grandeur; but God's ways are quieter, and his sons are sent to tread the world in meekness, poverty, and suffering, to seek and to save the fallen. We, therefore, neither undervalue nor exaggerate our relations to Jesus Christ. But in our monotheism we are strict and practical: our cry is that of the bigoted Musalman, who de-

clares, "La Ilahi Illilla!" —"There is no God but the One God." In our allegiance to the Son of God we are decided and unabashed. We maintain that he is our model, he is our centre, his life is the law of our spiritual being, that he is the divinity in man, the head and the harmony of those who have gone before him.

Have I explained the whole relations between God and Christ? No: none but Christ can fully interpret Christ. As I approach more closely to the perfection of Divine Humanity, the fitter I shall become to do it.

CHRIST-LIFE.

Life is made up of two parts,— the part of action and the part of passion. Action means *doing*, passion means *suffering*. What did Jesus Christ do? He came to do what? Not to make a doctrine, not to found a moral law, not to establish a religion even, far less to establish his own worship. Others did all this before him. He came to reveal the nature and will of God, and in the light of that revelation to lay down the basis of a kingdom, of a society, of a divine household, wherein the relations of men and their Maker and their relations to

each other should be as they had never been before. That God, acknowledged by many as the Creator, the King, regarded by some as the Preserver, feared by most as the Destroyer, might be known as the Father, trusted, loved, looked up to like an earthly parent in all conditions, in all difficulties, and thus glorified in each act of each day,—nay, in all life and death,—was the principle which he came to establish. That men who looked upon each other, as aliens, strangers, not unoften enemies, who, disliked, distrusted, deluded by each other, feared, ill-treated, made tools of, made toys of each other, should forsake such attitudes, and look upon each other as members of the same household, brothers, equals, friends, children of the same Father, bound to cherish, help, edify, elevate, sanctify each other by the overmastering impulse of love, a mutual interest and a common yearning, an intense feeling of oneness, of *ownness*, is the principle which Jesus Christ came to establish. The vilest and least, the noblest and most high, formed one family, and sat side by side, the last often becoming first and the first last in loving justice to the claims of all. Sickness, sorrow, death, pain, poverty, more than everything else

sin, with its loathsome misery, in one member of God's household, should call forth the tenderest sympathy and demand instant cure. Such was the commonwealth of affection he came to establish: such he felt was the will of God. He was convinced that this was his own calling and work, for this he was sent into the world. As the Father loved his children with the most genuine human affection, he loved his disciples with the same affection; he revealed the wonderful humanity of God. As God loved all men, so he wanted men should love each other, "that they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The fierce energy and unremitting labor with which he did this work, the fasting and watching, the endless teaching, praying, healing, wandering, ministering, are imperfectly recorded in the four Gospels. It is recorded with what sweetness, tenderness, reasonableness, speechless sympathy, and genuine good will to all men and women he did his work, fearless of the rich, or the mighty, or the learned, unyielding, stern, scathing in his rebukes to the insincere, lowly and ever-forgiving to the penitent

sinner. At what time of the day or night was he inactive? to what duty unmindful? what lowly office did he not undertake? His young, gentle life was spent too soon thus working for God and man. He died. The divine spirit in Christ showed how to be perpetually active in the loving service of God and man. And Christian men and communities have shown how to imitate that activity.

In the next place, these ceaseless endeavors to establish God's kingdom by some hidden law brought on fearful sufferings. It is strange to think that the most devoted workers of the world should be its devoted victims also. But we do not know in what spirit to bear our sufferings. One part of Christ's appointment was to teach us to suffer. Ascetics in India, and Stoics in other parts of the world did show how they could suffer and die without flinching. They scorned pain and death, and loftily looked down, perhaps pitied those who inflicted the sufferings; but Christ taught the lesson of suffering in a different spirit. The meekness, gentleness, uncomplaining silence, and unchangeable forgiveness with which the Man of Sorrows bore his dreadful lot revealed love and

submission to the Father who appointed that lot, and the poor misguided men who administered it. He did not scorn or undervalue his suffering; he bent and wept under its bitterness, bent in sweet humility, saw the loving hand which offered it, and drank his cup to the dregs. We are taught that he who accepts suffering in meekness and love not only disarms the suffering, but actually turns it to joy and glory. The sorrows of the Messiah, the malignant persecution which dogged his steps, the cruel calumnies of which he was the victim, the heartless indignities they showered upon him, have not been, cannot be, exceeded by those of any other man. And the silence, the calmness, the strength, the loving trust, and the tender forgiveness with which he bore them will forever be the strength, the example, and the consolation of all who are called to suffer in God's name.

These divinely appointed activities and divinely appointed sufferings culminate in his memorable death. That death which consummates his life-work and his life-sorrow has for its meaning the conquest of death. Christ-like men do not fear death; rather, they look upon it with longing hope. The sign of the cross, accursed at one time,

now blessed, is the symbol of the Christian's faith and hope. On the towering crest of the lordly cathedral, on the fortified heights of many a castle and palace, on the marble spire of the hero's tomb, this singular sign of the cross is reared up. On the low mouldering chapel of the poor village or hamlet, on the steep roadside of the desert heath, over the humble grass-grown grave of the unknown rustic, the sign of the crucifix stands in its solitary significance. It is the symbol of victory over nature, over sorrow, over want, over death. It stands at the head of the sick man's bedside, it stands within reach of the dead man's grasp; it witnesses the coronation of kings, the vows of the bridegroom and the bride. The devout in all states look upon it with the same trust and awe. It is the symbol of God's will ruling all the events of human life. Man's wishes and man's life running in a smooth, placid line, God's almighty will falling like a thunder-bolt, cutting, dividing, covering it, makes the figure of the cross. On this mysterious figure was the Son of God slain. Its significance shall never be lost.

What shall I say of Christ's resurrection? Men either do not believe it at all, or believe it in a

most gross material sense. It is disagreeable to disturb any one's faith; all one can do is to try to express one's own. I believe in the rising of Christ,—not the rising of his material body, but of his spiritual body. I claim to have seen that body, and I have borne witness elsewhere to what I have seen. That was the turning-point of my religious life,—to me a most memorable event. The lineaments of the ascended Son of God find expression in a spiritual unity of character, of influence, of a personality exceedingly near, exceedingly interior, but fully realizable in faith and personal relationship. It is substantial, not material. Its substance is the same as the composition of our own souls, as the composition of the Spirit of God with whom we commune every day. His bleeding hands, bended head, and broken feet, his wounded brow, his pierced side, so familiar by art and by description, so inexpressibly affecting, do not any longer represent his risen presence. It is full of the glory and sweetness of an incorruptible spiritual life, unmarred, indivisible, whole, without wound, or pain, or blood, or flesh. The wounds and the agony, the flesh and its surroundings were all real. They are historical, indelible, the type of

what those must inevitably suffer who toil in his footprints. But, as he now is, as he now appears in his resurrection robes, as he reigns in the spiritual realm, as he blesses and consoles afflicted humanity, earthly disfigurements are no longer traceable. We discern his unspeakable sympathy, which is the chief feature of his love, the grace of his meekness, the lustre of his strength, his submission and sweet sanctity,—in short, the undying illustration of all that he came to be, to teach, and to leave behind him for the salvation of man. Thus re-embodied his ascended figure knocks at every man's heart-door, and seeks admission. Christ has not only risen, but returned, as he promised. As a quickening spirit, as a heavenly figure, as the form of immortality, as the law of the spiritual life, has he returned, and doth dwell in our hearts. There let him abide forever. Abide, Lord, as the divine Man! abide as the Son of God, as the Friend of the poor man!

THE SPIRIT ALL IN ALL.

Saint Paul prophesies to the Corinthians that, "when all things shall be subdued unto Christ, then shall the Son himself be subject unto him

who put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Indeed, to us, in the Brahmo-Somaj, God is all in all. But what is the nature of the privilege and glory of realizing God as all in all? To be enjoyed as a privilege, it is most essential that every member of our faith should cheerfully surrender himself and be thoroughly subdued to Christ; namely, to that spirit of submissive sonship which Jesus exemplified. Have we done this? If we have not, our professed Theism is but a name, a form, if not a delusion and a snare. None knoweth the mind of the Father but the Son. Unless we are sons, we do not know the purpose or the Dispensation of God. And, when we are without knowledge here, what is the practical and personal value of mere religious professions? The spirit of Christ reveals the spirit of the Father's purpose,—a purpose which applies to an infinite diversity of spiritual constitutions and circumstances, the spirit remaining ever the same. To that spirit all must be subjected in faith and love, in order that the mind of God may reign over the carnal mind, and that the gracious Parent, ready to help, ready to save, may be daily had access to. Christ was a Theist, the Prince of

all Theists; but his Theism is not our Theism until his spirit is our spirit. Until with him we are consecrated, offered up, and crucified to the holy will of God, we cannot claim his sympathy or call him Brother. When his law of life is our law of life, and the spirit that filled him fills us, our religion is seen to be his religion, — the Dispensation of the Spirit. This is the condition of all spiritual, practical, revealed Theism. The prophecy of Saint Paul, quoted above, is not unauthorized: it is the legitimate result of, and in faithful conformity with the Master's own forecast that the Dispensation of the Spirit Comforter shall come. We in the Brahmo-Somaj declare, with faith and force, that the Dispensation of the Spirit has come, that we are of it, and that it hath sealed our salvation. What, then, has the function of the Son ceased? I again say it shall never cease. One-half of religion is to find God in man's own heart. To be Christ-like is to find perpetually the divinity, the God-likeness, in man, as Christ found God in himself. This is one-half of revelation. The other half means immersion in the humanity of God. It is the perception that, after all, amid all the impurities and unspiritualities of man, the

Spirit of God makes up the sum of humanity, shaping our rough-hewn ends and rounding our imperfect purposes. It is to find the image of the Deity in the lowliest and vilest of the race, as Christ found it, and restore man to the place from which he fell. When all this is accomplished, when everything is thoroughly subdued to the spirit of divine humanity, when the Father is found and acknowledged in the sons of men all over the world, in the meanest among mankind, then Christ Jesus, and the thousand Christ-like souls before and after, reveal the Spirit in fulness unto us, and disappear into the infinite expanse where God, God alone, is All-in-all,—the One without a second. The unity of man with God is the soul of all personal religion: the unity of man with man is the soul of all organized church life, all brotherhood, all community, all co-operation in the service of God and man. Christ's conclusive prayer, "that they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee," embodies it fully. This is the twofold process of perfectness by which God leads *in spirit his chosen children to each other's bosom* through his manifestations in humanity, and leads at last all creation into the infinite depths of him-

self. "From him all these things sprang into life, in him they are, and back into him they all retire in the end. Inquire of all men about him. He is the Brahma!" Such is the peaceful reconciliation in the Brahmo-Somaj, which the essence of Hinduism makes with the essence of Christianity.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SPIRIT IN HISTORY.

PERSONAL DESTINY.

WHOEVER has helped to carry out a divine purpose has helped to make history. History dates from the birth of great men. The Dispensation of God begins with personal history. That the Supreme Life of the universe embodies himself in human form, and works out world-compelling purposes is a doctrine which has prevailed at all times. When the material creation is talked of as God's glorified form, naturally, man, the glory of creation, and above all the most glorious among mankind, should be specially honored as the Father's image. It is an instinctive belief, therefore, that the Spirit of God descends upon the scenes of history, deals with men, and, through his incarnations, or chosen ones, affects the destinies of mankind. This is the popular belief in incarnation; it may be made universal when you say that the Spirit of God is active in every holy man, that,

from the greatest to the least, we are all his instruments. God, the transcendent Personality, thus takes a most active part in human affairs. Why is the anthropomorphic instinct universal? Why should the most uninstructed and most refined secretly regard the Creator as having the essentials of man, the estimates differing only with the progress of their own culture? There is an underlying truth of tremendous significance. Worship the ancestor, worship the tree or the stone, or the lotos or the snake, the inanimate and semi-animate are invested for the moment with a higher personality. And higher humanity, in latest or earliest times, is practically the Spirit of God. The Infinite as an objective is a matter of glimmering consciousness,—half revealed, if not hidden,—the constrainer of our wondering faith, a reverence trembling at its own ignorance and littleness. God in the finite—in nature, in life, and most of all in man and man's achievements—rules the world's faith and spiritual life. You ask whether any particular form of religion will last? The answer is, Has that religion a divine man-centre, a commissioned prophet, an inspired apostolate? If it has, it will surely last; if it has not, even

Omnipotence cannot save it. Forms of thought, rules of conduct, decisions of majorities, fiats of councils bide their day, long or short; but spiritual religion, union with God, means union with the divine concrete. An instinct of religion is only a grain of the soul's potency; it may grow into a sickly superstition, a foolish idolatry, or the perfection of genuine faith. Your own spiritual progress is in the measure and of the kind of what you put your trust in. And though, indeed, we all believe more or less that Providence acts out appointed purposes on the stage of history, the religious worth of our instinctive belief is in proportion to the light and revelation of God's Spirit in what we have actually seen or heard. This determines the scale and quality of a religion; namely, the kind of character it discovers in its God,— that is to say, the kind of humanity it enforces. The spiritual objective becomes the believer's spirit in the course of time.

What did Schelling mean when he said, "There is in every man a certain feeling that he has been what he is from all eternity, and by no means became such in time?" Wordsworth strikes but an echo to this note when he sings,—

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."

What did Krishna mean when, in the Gita, he said, "Nay, not that I never was in being before; nor that thou never hadst being before; nor that these kings did not exist before; nor is it that we shall cease to exist in future"? And is not all this summed up when Jesus made the startling exclamation, "Before Abraham was, I Am!" The impulses of the Reason Eternal rose and fell deep within God, unwatched, like Atlantic upheavals; and, as time unrolled its mysterious needs, these impulses took shape in purposes, the purposes took shape in events, the events took shape in man, and the man came down to take his place among his fellow-men. Each man, if he was enlightened, would discover in his life a divine purpose; an object to fulfil, which concerned many more than himself; a greatness and goodness to achieve. He, too, is a prince of the line. Like Napoleon the Great, he, too, is "a child of destiny." We know myriads die before they realize this. Very few, indeed, in any age do so; but those who do even if they are not of the most intelligent or refined or aspiring, find honor and recognition among vast circles of men. They are the creators

of history. Weavers and workers in leather like Kabir and Rabidass, fishers and tax-gatherers like Peter and Matthew, most commonplace of men, need not despair of discovering in their appointment the seal of the heavenly King: no one is too mean to share in the royalty of the sonship of God. All else is vain and sure to pass away; only the purpose of God,—as embodied in each one, as realized, developed, and acted out through powers of body, mind, heart, in event, in circumstance, in character,—only the purpose of the Eternal outlasts the changes and ravages of time. The fixed intents of Providence are embodied in organism again and again,—in lands, nations, individuals, in systems of thought, in courses of history, in dispensations of religion,—who knows in what, in how many other forms? Each man, therefore, is an incarnation of the Spirit and purpose of the Eternal. Each man has a most important destiny to fulfil, if he only knew it. Those who have fulfilled it have left a history behind.

But within our experience the whole course of things seems to turn the other way; they are contrary to our cherished ideals, hostile to every effort we make to better ourselves and the world in gen-

eral. A struggle to make real what is highest and best in us, a determination to bring things back to the ideal state from which they have fallen or which they never obtained, necessitates what is called history. "Blessed is that nation which has no history," which has no struggle to go through, which is therefore full of peace. But such a nation is a nation of vegetables, because the law of struggle is the law of progress, and the true prophet brings a sword from heaven. The end of life is surely peace, and not war; but honorable peace is the reward of honorable war. Stagnant men and stagnant peoples subside in the silence of the peace of death.

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime."

Sublime in what? In the most painful struggles with worldliness, idleness, triumphant wickedness, poverty, ill health, death. Flesh and blood, as well as the rest of surrounding things clog at every step the progress and realization of the purpose of God in us. Our circumstances, with the fatal hand of necessity, seem to hold us to the old course in which the whole world persists from birth to death.

The path of Godward originality is closed in future: there seems to be no inspiration, no superhuman guidance. Faith is lonely, desolate, friendless. The eternal purpose, the spiritual destiny wherefor we were made, compels us to struggle incessantly against this inhospitable surrounding, that we, too, may live up to our highest thought, as our fathers lived before us. Many men, most men, die in the struggle. Those who survive leave behind them a history full of the dealings of God. Thus in the history of man's life is God's Spirit and purpose worked out.

In every profession, in every walk of life, there are what we call "men of genius,"—men with great gifts, with the spirit and the industry to use those gifts. It is said the poet is born, not made; but the musician, the painter, the ruler, even the physician and the preacher, is also born, not made. All originality is born, and not made. The making of a man through education is not a trifling matter. The problem which education has to solve is how to adapt formal training to the natural talents and temperament of a man,—how he may find the light to behold and effect his destiny. If this solution were found out, there would be more emi-

nent men in every pursuit of life, the difficulty of self-education would be much less, and its necessary imperfections considerably removed. But every one has to be continually reminded of the old precept, "Know thyself"; and still as many of us are ignorant about what they came to do as in the time of Socrates. Self-knowledge, in its true sense, is the knowledge of the purpose of God in our appointed life; and there is no calling, not even the meanest, from which such purpose is absent. Every man is not a genius. Most of us are mediocre. But if by religious and moral training the youth of a country were taught and helped to discriminate their aptitude, every one would find more use and more success in life than at present seems to be the case. Perhaps then money-making would cease to be the only destiny of mankind. There would be more dignity and less despair in the world; more devoutness, less doubt, less convention,— altogether a larger measure of humanity and personal worth. The leading of the Spirit is not a vague mysticism; it is the concrete choosing of a definite work, the doing of that work with the utmost industry; it is incessant self-culture, incessant service to the cause taken up. When every

individual member of a community is thus led and thus occupied, what doubt that not only religious life, but every order of life, would be raised to a higher level?

The Spirit-presence of God reigns in the heart's history from the earliest infancy to the close of life. As a wild joyousness and unbounded liberty Providence dawns upon the mysterious consciousness of the cradled child. He whose insight can penetrate the mists that obscure his remote past will bear evidence to this. Then, in the unforced, innocent activity of boyhood, the Spirit reveals himself as uprising intelligence, tenderness, and willing dependence towards guardians; freedom sweetened by the discipline of parental love; the inebriate hilariousness of young life and power; the clear, strong, natural sense of the right and true; the vague reverence for the Infinite. There is a fitness in angels as perpetual youth. In this country childhood is worshipped as divine: it is the divinity of Greek art, wherein self-unconscious youth realizes within itself beauty, freedom, heavenliness, and strength. With the prime of manhood God's Spirit brings us higher messages of divine life. The initiation in religion is a verita-

ble ascent up to the throne of God. In the history of the soul's true conversion the presence of the Spirit is like a sacred incense, a supersensible light that shines out of the circumambient sky, as that light which shone once upon the gates of Damascus before persecuting Saul. I remember what overflowing emotions, thrilling impulses, like electric currents, flew through body, mind, soul; crushing penitence that shed its showers upon the dust; holy resolutions that filled the earth with solemnity, that made repeated consecration of life's every power and possibility to thy service, O my God! When God possesses the soul, the tearless weep like Augustine, the proud fall prone, men retire into the wilderness like Gautama, or dance like David, or foam in the mouth like Mohammed, or become blind like Paul, or ride out into the darkness never, never to return into the world again. Every great religion is full of the history of conversions, every nationality is full of such history, every true life red-letters the day of its conversion, every community dates the descent of the Spirit. And from that memorable day does not the Spirit embody himself ever more and more fully in motives and duties and impulses, in darkening sor-

rows, in the glories of sacred joy? The history of that early persecution for standing by thy blessed cause, O God, is the history of thy dealings; the enthusiasm of preaching and teaching and renouncing and serving, the enthusiasm of being and doing good, was inspired by thee. Through these multiplying decades, crowded with events that came without my willing them, that brought much trial, much sorrow, much blessing, thy Spirit has drawn me closer, still closer, to thyself. Exiled in far foreign lands by the zeal of thy service, thou didst uphold me, and give me success. Thou didst unfold my nature to the influences of mountain and sea, to the influences of holy men, to the examples of great nationalities, to the acceptance of thy glorified Son, to the harmony of great religions, to the prospects of the new Dispensation of thy Spirit. The more one achieves, the greater is the field of achievement for him, if the Spirit of God be with him. But the history of inspired souls is not so often contemporary as posthumous. The sons of God write their autobiography in the souls of the coming generations. The purpose of the Eternal is fulfilled, not only by what the man of destiny does while he is alive, but what he does long after he

is dead. The lights of history shine with a splendor that cannot be put out. They are ever congregating under the same law of inspiration, heroes and philosophers, saints and sages, acting their several parts in the unity of spirit to unfold one august purpose of

> "That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

Providence "shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will," as Shakespeare says; but it involves the whole wisdom or spiritual history. However hard or self-willed, we cannot escape the hands of God, or thwart him, or defeat his purposeful power. We are puppets, boastful as we are; and we are most under compulsion when we think we are most free. Things appointed shall happen. We are wisest when we throw our lot into the scale of destiny. In the conduct of spiritual life three things are necessary: ascertain the purpose of God in your existence; ceaselessly endeavor, by the use of every faculty given you, to work out that purpose; wait and most faithfully depend upon the power

and providence of God for the opportunity which will surely come. The all-wise Providence undoubtedly co-operates with the man who faithfully labors to fulfil his destiny; but the greater the destiny, the greater the opposition to its fulfilment, and the greater, therefore, the struggles to overcome it. The record of these struggles is the invaluable history of spiritual experiences; for the Spirit presides over them, and gives them the victory. Every great life is eventful though not dramatic; every event is ordained from on high. The passions, prejudices, and errors of men are many and sad. The very best among us are not free from them. These are inevitable by nature's limitations, which no one may go beyond. But through the worst weaknesses and wickednesses the wisdom of God effects the individual's destiny. We have, each one of us, an element of the unknown in our nature. Neither sight nor self-possession extends there; there we feel we are helpless, and must depend. That is the chief centre of the Spirit's action. Our personal freedom and our personal limitations no more affect the carrying out of divine providences than the forces and movements of natural objects the progress of the solar system. The

law of gravitation harmonizes within itself the lesser attractions of things toward each other. The omnipotence of God rounds every grain of sand and the career of every little soul. Both the good and the bad serve their several illustrations of the Spirit of God in history. If we cannot leave the light of a great example, we leave a warning for the guidance of those who come behind. The history of every life thus forms a chapter in the great scriptures of humanity.

NATIONAL DESTINY.

In the life of a nation fully formed there is a unity of character most concrete and palpable. Like unto an individual's spirit, you see the spirit of a great nation when in contact with it. Its thousand energies are directed to one great purpose,— the general good of the people. Its material wealth, the products of its soil, its varied industries, its laws,— made by the people themselves,— its training of youth, employment of labor, provision for age and poverty, its churches, schools, hospitals, museums, theatres, form different features of the national body, as the limbs and organs in their different forms make the individ-

ual human body. And there is a Life and Spirit in the latter as there is in the former, and that is the presence of God. The more united a nation is in its interests and aspirations, the clearer and more definite the character of that Spirit, the less its unity, the more unspiritual it is; but if it has an integrity of aim, the Spirit grows, and what is imperfect to-day tends to grow perfect in time. There is such a thing as the birth of a nation,—its youth, its maturity, its decline, its death, its resurrection. The Americans represent the birth and youth of a great people, Germany its manhood, England its maturity, France its decline. Greeks and Romans are extinct; and India shows a national resurrection. No nation need die if it can adapt itself to the new circumstances that are incessantly arising. No nation need decline if the vitality in it could strike out fresh paths of progress. But that youthful nations should grow unto maturity, and the mature ones should retain their wisdom, it is always necessary that the Spirit's indications should be recognised and carried out by them in the order of time and sequence. The wise men of a nation are the representatives of the Spirit of God in it. They can bring its resources

into order and unity; they can influence its masses in the right direction; they can, in their own persons, illustrate the character and destiny of their people. Thus a nation, in one view, is but a larger man; and the Spirit of God is its life. It has a destiny, and the Spirit of God guides its destiny. Each nation has a peculiar character, like an individual,—certain distinctive God-given qualities, which physical and spiritual causes tend alike to foster. It is divine will that produces these qualities, or puts in motion these causes. The personal qualities are obvious in each man, and almost as obvious in a people generally, though, indeed, sometimes they are more striking in the national aggregate than in the individual unit. In a concrete form such characteristics take shape in religious systems, in forms of government, customs of society, and habits of domestic life. Every Egyptian shared more or less in the Egyptian instinct for the vast and the permanent; the Pyramids and the Catacombs were the effects of this instinct. Each Grecian shared in the Hellenic genius for beauty and symmetry; the Indian relics of the period of Greek occupation, in the fourth century, give evidence of that almost as much as the remains at

Thebes and Athens. Each Roman was a Roman inasmuch as he represented the national spirit of law and order in their stern reality. In modern times the love of constitutional liberty in the Teutonic character has embodied itself in the character of Englishmen and Americans. Personal freedom of thought, speech, and act is claimed not only by men, but by women also. The Semitic ideal of the absolute power of one person, of God the Supreme Person, and his prophet or the successors of that prophet, has borne fruit in the rigid faith of Mohammedan countries, and in the absence of that spirit of progress, the modern spirit, which leads ultimately to the mental and spiritual emancipation of each man. And among ourselves in India we find that the spiritual instincts of the people which always forced them into the search and embodiment of the Infinite in their philosophy, in their literature, in their worship, in all the innumerable changes and developments of Indian history, still act, however feebly, in shaping the movements of the time, the most important of these being the Brahmo-Somaj. Now, the *dealings* of Providence systematically work to mature these distinctive qualities into the perfection of national as of per-

sonal character. What man of faith does not believe that the Spirit of God wills and works toward his salvation in the perfectness of spiritual life? And what devout patriot will hesitate to believe that the Spirit carries out his purposes in the history of his people?

Often, indeed, has it been the fashion to speak of individual men as if they were puppets in the hands of an omnipotent God. Is this consciousness, then, of carrying out our self-determined purposes, which is the very essence of our manhood,— is it all a dream? It is the old question of the discord of personal freedom and divine almightiness. There is an apparent difficulty involved in this which must remain a mystery; but the universal experience of men bears out the fact that every one is practically the master of his own conduct, and, on the other hand, also that

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

Each nation also has to work out its own destiny. But over the affairs of the man or the nation or the world there presides the genius of Providence, to give effect to laws, to purposes, to a universal

progress, very foreign to the plans and interests that move our narrow hearts. To illustrate the relation between the movements of the divine will and our own in the regulation of events, the example is aptly given of the independent movements of every animated object and the predetermined course of the earth as it revolves round the central sun. The daily or yearly pilgrimages of the planet never hinder any one of us in the pursuit of our individual callings; but whatever efforts any community or all mankind can make will at no time interfere with the order of day and night and "the sweet succession of the seasons." The drought of May or the drenching rains of July will carry off a great many who live and move around us, and Nature, beneficent in her operations, will sometimes make strange havoc of her own innocent children; but we have, nevertheless, in us a force that will defy the tyrannies of our environment. If we cannot always overcome them, they shall not always defeat the purposes of our intellect and soul. Surely, the Spirit of God is infinitely more powerful than the mere forces of nature, and can help or hinder us to a proportionate extent; but it is the law of our being that our purposes, for a

while at least, should run parallel to God's purposes. Unjust as men's motives are,— nay, though men sometimes run counter to God,— yet men are free. In the end, however, what we do shall merge in the divinely appointed course of things, as the rivers run into the sea without any apparent increase of its bulk.

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours, to make them thine."

What a hankering is there in men to connect the history of their lives with the past! What a harping upon ancient authorities, what a fancy for the primitive, an unconscious reaching after the Spirit that breathed into the faith and conduct of our fathers! We instinctively believe that God's hand was in the events gone by. Can we but link our own times to the ceaseless chain of destiny that girdles the great sphere of history, we, too, shall feel that the Spirit of God is with our people. Then we, too, shall know our duty in completing the evolution of the future. In modern times nations are forming, or maturing, or declining as in the past, only their life is richer than before and their development faster. Each nation realizes

better its work and its mission. Germany stands for education, France for good taste, England for constitutional freedom, and America for progress in all directions. The purpose and the will of the Spirit lead these nations nearer and nearer in the formation of a universal brotherhood and the establishment of God's kingdom. Like geological periods that converge to the formation of the earth's crust whereon we tread, the Titanic revolutions of history laid the foundation of the law, order, and progress of our own times. It is the unity of an eternal plan; it is a necessary evolution; it is one connected history; it is the august purpose of the Spirit revealing himself, and realizing the far object for which man was created. There is a mystery that cannot be got rid of in the beginning, sequence, and termination of events. How some men and nations succeed in whatever they put their hands to! How others fail in their very best endeavors! How from small beginnings the grandest results come forth! How plausible successes, splendid undertakings, superabundant promises come to a miserable end! No doubt there is the greatest need of our putting forth all the force that we may feel possessed of, that genius, talents, means, and

men go to make up the future of every cause; but, after all that may be said, there are those strange visitors called accidents, and in too many cases it is these that make a large part of history. The familiar proverb is that in the history of men, as well as of nations, it is "the unexpected that always happens." Our calculations and preparations are mysteriously defeated; and things look much more simple or much more complex, in most cases much more unaccountable, than we ever thought. These accidents are either cruel mysteries, lawless chances, powers of fate, blind and mindless, or they are the fiats of a supernatural will, an Intelligence above our minds, with whom rests the final issue of everything that is begun. The man of devout character will not abate one jot of his energy and dutifulness to anticipate the interferences of Providence, but faith always looks for the grace and will of God to supplement it. Fate is indeed a power, but it is not a blind or lawless power; it is a higher intelligence, a higher will, a higher method of love, that corrects the feebleness of our conceptions. It supplements our endeavors by turning earthly events into the fulfilment of heavenly purposes. "His-

tory, looked at for the first time," says Amiel, "seems to us accident and confusion; looked at for the second time, it seems to us logical and necessary." Looked at for the last time, it is the carrying out of a universal plan wherein persons are simply means to an end, God all in all. Every person, even the most ambitious, is born to achieve much nobler ends than he is aware of. Every nation has a higher destiny than its best men realize. No truly noble cause shall fail through lack of divine aid. But our faith and intelligence are too miserably small to compass the ultimate effects of what we begin. God's love is greater than our fondest aspiration. Our cause takes an unexpected turn, all calculations are defeated, Some One else seems to have the upper hand, and nothing but the most childlike dependence can reconcile one's utmost endeavor with the unyielding tendency of things. In every man's faith and determination there is a power as invincible as fate; and he thus combats fate with fate, law with law, — a combat in which the higher law must overcome the lower. The lower law is the law of nature, of cold and heat, hunger and want, intellect and taste, heredity and physical organism.

The higher law is the law of the sonship of God,—of dependence, self-sacrifice, love, trust in divine inspiration. Here weakness becomes strength, foolishness more wise than worldly wisdom, and defeat is turned into victory. The history of world-leaders is full of unequal combats,—one man persecuted by an entire people, silenced, apparently extinguished. But "one with God is a majority." Anon behold the buried hero rising from the dead to conquer the whole world. The history of great nations, like the Jews, the Greeks, the Buddhists, the Christians, is made up of such strange combats and resurrections. God's purpose is unalterable. Even the dead speak. All these men and these peoples felt they had a destiny; and with this power of destiny they combated their disadvantages, overcoming them at last. The power of faith thus makes history. God accomplishes ends through the inner certainties of the spiritually-minded. The spiritually-minded ought to be the nation's leaders. The so-called religious are not necessarily the most spiritual. Those who have the intuition and the love to perceive the national destiny and the self-sacrifice to carry it out are the spiritual leaders. The Spirit of God

makes such leaders, and through them builds up the nations.

THE SPIRIT IN NATIONS.

The nation is only a larger man with the Spirit of God for its life. Its life is a unity made up of millions of lives. Its form is a combination of countless forms. Many souls make its spirit, many interests make its interests; yet a nation is an organized unity. The country is its home. What the body is to the soul, the land is to the people, dearly to be loved, preserved, beautified. What energy, what resources, what growing improvements, what wealth, youth, strength, wisdom, religion, enterprise, union, progress, make up the life of a people! The unity is so living, so vast, so full of soul and purpose, that we cannot but behold in it the presence of a higher mind than that of the individual man. It is the Spirit of the Creator of all things that gathers so many units to form a vast aggregate called the nation. Patriotism, rightly understood, is the love of God, whose presence is in one's own people, just as much as poetic feeling means the love of God in nature. Patriotism is an instinct as unaccountable, yet ineradicable, as the religious instinct or

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the love of home, or even self-love. The nobler a man's nature, the more distinctly it comes out. Duty to your country is as sacred as duty to your God, because God gave you your body, your home, and your land and people. Therefore, the patriot serves his land, and gives his life in the service. Varied as the impulses of the members of a nation are, they become one impulse in the national life, the unity being effected through an agency we so little realize. As many trees together make the forest, many peaks make the Himalayas, many members make the family, many professors of learning make the university, so many men and women make the nation. It is the same unity and variety, the play of the Spirit Divine, that makes all these organizations. Your politicians, warriors, scientists, ministers of religion, your mothers, wives, guardians, millionaires, and paupers, your virtuous men and vicious men, prophets and Pharisees, unite to form one national life. The aggregate itself becomes a unit, and the lives of different people stand out as so many distinct figures painted on a great canvas. As each man has his constitution, his characteristics, his accomplishments, his peculiar destiny, his infancy, youth, maturity, and

decline, so has each nation. And, as all these individual men taken together make the community, so all these nations put together make mankind. A family is a higher unit than each member, as a community is a higher unit than a family, the nation is a higher unit than a community; but mankind is the largest unit that we can think of. Yet as the life of each member joined with that of others makes the character of a home, and as the history of different families make the history of the community, so all the communities, in the manner of their life and conduct, make the character of the nation. A father loves and has his home in his family, a leader in his community, a patriot in his people; but the Spirit and his prophets love and have their home in all mankind. A nation, therefore, like all mankind, means a progressive life, representing more or less fully the advancement of its individuals and communities. Thus, as each man, by his faithfulness or otherwise, carries out or defeats the purpose of Providence in his personal life, so each nation, by its righteousness or public vices, may effect the Divine purpose and perpetuate itself or bring about its own downfall. At one time it is said

every man lived by robbing his neighbor, and every nation by making war upon other nations. The rule of life now is that the common good of all individuals makes the welfare of each, and the common advancement of all nations means the progress of each. The war instinct is still there both in the man and in the people, but with the advancement of the world it tends every day to become less and less; and the promise of the future is the promise of peace and universal prosperity. The sovereignty of the Spirit of God rules individual and national interests, and labors to combine these interests into a great spiritual commonwealth. We do not see many signs of it, because of the selfishness of individuals and classes; but we do see some, and from this we entertain the rational hope that, as each nation maintains and intensifies its integrity, all nations shall learn from it, until, in the great fraternity of God's children which some day shall come, the vain superiorities and inferiorities shall cease, and the law of love shall be the law of nations.

How can this be but by each nation knowing its destiny and giving effect to the same? When national destiny lies in the preordained purpose of

God, the deepest knowledge of that purpose on the part of the people can only come by communion with his Spirit. Religion is another name for such spiritual communion; and religion, therefore, is the greatest essential of national life. Politics, arts, industries, education, are all indispensable; but they are the invariable outcome of a nation's spiritual life. When a people is without religion and morals, or indifferent to them, disaster and degeneracy shall overtake it, because it has lost the principle of higher life and progress. The dead must disappear. Ancients as well as moderns prove this. As the life of a nation is higher or lower, more spiritual or less, so are its politics, its arts, its civilization. The highest personal improvement comes from the highest personal religion; the highest national development comes from the highest national faith. God rules the destinies of the man and of the people Let all nations seek him, serve him, and be at one with him. Monarchy has its defects, aristocracy has its weak spots, and democracy is anything but blameless. Only the rule of God is perfect. So let each man rule himself, and each nation find its perfect life in submitting to the rule of the All-holy One.

THE SPIRIT IN THE TIMES.

The Spirit rules the times. God has touched and stirred the heart of mankind to further endeavors. There is an upheaval in every region of life. The nations are restless, the lands full of turmoil. Religion can scarcely keep confined within its old limits, and the unrest in politics is complete. Everything rushes to go forward, seeks for a nobler aim, struggles to occupy a higher plane, looks out for a better adjustment. The great industrial classes of civilized lands are rising up everywhere, like ocean waters touched by the blast of storm. They appeal to the law of right, claim to be the children of God, and ask if it is the divine purpose they should be always kept down. The higher ranks of society seem bewildered to know their relations with those who lie underneath. The Spirit of the times is readjusting the temporal and the moral interests of the world. No subject nation, no downcast community, no unrepresented class, can be trodden under foot with impunity. Whether it be the Jews under the Czar, or the Armenians under the Sultan, the persecuted have always friends in God and man.

The present undoubtedly is better than the past; but, in view of the future, the present is only a small beginning. The aspirations of the times are far higher than any possible achievement yet effected; the cry still is "Higher, higher!" What force is it that thus stirs mankind? It is the Spirit of God. The excellences of the past were from him, the ambitions of the present are made by his breath, and the prospects of the future lie in his hands. Let us recognise him in our surroundings. Men have been so unjust towards each other, nations have been so despotic, religions have been so insufficient, that a larger measure of truth is demanded everywhere. We feel the shortcomings of our performance; we feel the stir of our instincts, the agony of our strivings, the weight of our sufferings. But, blind as we are, we do not see who stands behind them all. Willing or unwilling, every man has to go forward. So every nation, so all mankind. Standing still means death. History shows it has meant death, and experience shows it will always mean that. The Spirit of God, recognized or unrecognized, submitted to or disobeyed, catches the man and the community by

the hair of the head, and drags them forward. It is better for them if they yield to that beneficent force. Woe to them if they resist it! That nation is looked upon as the scum of all nations which still adheres to the mire of its past iniquities. That religion has ceased to live which does not look to universal principles, and that society which will not reform, and go forward, shall surely die.

The fire of the Spirit has descended upon the earth, and entered into the constitution of individual life, of domestic relations, of the relations of the sexes, the structure of society, and the organization of the realm. Literature is being purified, amusements are being reformed, public vices condemned, public life ennobled, and commerce purged of its iniquities. The resources of the land are in the way of being developed everywhere. The offices of the State are being filled with better men, the laws of health more scrupulously regarded and enforced, and cleanliness of the land and the morality of the people better looked after. Poverty is not as unheeded as it one time was. There are hospitals, asylums, infirmaries, and schools for the benefit of every grade of society. The spirit of good, which is only another name for the Spirit

of God, inspires the town, the council chamber, the church vestry, the university, and the boards of trade. The greatest good of the greatest number is the one recognized aim of all publicists, and has even gone so far as to make the most important maxim of public morals. The wrong-doer is ashamed of his secret vices; and wickedness has retired into the dark, unrecognisable background of society. Worth and excellence in every pursuit of life have the greater chance of recognition, and poverty and suffering in the right cause are sometimes glorified. God rules the times, and in every land and in every people the influence of that rule is felt. The wilds of the earth are being reclaimed; the savages and castaways of mankind are uplifted; the influence of higher thought and faith reaches more or less everybody in body, in mind, in character, in faith. The world is being perfected. Great men there always were in the past,—geniuses whose parallel it is difficult to find to-day, and holy men whose sanctity was unique; but the wealth of humanity was at no time better distributed and more eagerly claimed than now. Better far that all men, however born, should have some share of the progress of the land and age than that

a few should monopolize the bounties of Heaven and leave the rest in outer darkness! Better far that all men should rise to moderate levels of human excellence than that some should ascend into the skies and the rest descend into the bottom of the pit! The justice of God, like the light of his sun, is meted out in a measure to all men. And those who, under his special mercy, enjoy the larger share must now, under stress of the Spirit of the age, sacrifice a portion of their possessions for those less favored than they.

It is customary with some men to extol the past at the expense of the present, as if all wisdom, all prophecy, all abundance of grace, had departed from the world, as if the antiquities alone present spiritual perfection. We hold the contrary view. The Dispensation of the Spirit attests itself in the higher intensity of feeling and conviction with which men express their sense of God at the present day. The increase of warmth, the eloquence of address in the whole literature of devotion, shows the pressure of the spirit in the religious impulses of man and the inward counsel of the Holy One who dwells in every heart. Also the power of persuasiveness has deepened in the char-

acter of the interpreters of the secrets of God. The gift of inspiration, instead of being withdrawn, is shed more largely among the foremost of mankind. The fire of faith has been rekindled under new conditions. Altogether, the ideals of moral and religious excellence are higher and more complex. The exemplars of the age, indeed, are not so singular in their exaltedness as the unique individualities of the past; but that is because the bulk of mankind has risen higher, and the contrast between the two is not so great. The violence in the religious world is much less. Theologians are more discriminate in the wrath of mutual condemnation. There is a ray of light and sweetness shed over the whole realm of human relations, making the path of brotherhood more practicable in future. Men are more patient, without losing their moral vigor; more tolerant, without losing their integrity of faith; more sympathetic without loss of enthusiasm for their respective causes. As the spirit of science leads to the search of unity in the forces of nature, so the spirit of truth leads to the search of common principles in all religions. Persecution is becoming hateful, exclusiveness a feature of bigotry. The

Spirit in the times favors the unity of all truth in religion, in science, in social progress, in all the pursuits of man. The times, in their progress, tend to make man one with God, one with his neighbor.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SPIRIT IN ALL RELIGIONS.

EVERY system of religion that has largely influenced the destinies of man has grown under the action and influence of the Spirit of God. All religions are not equally true, but inspiration is the monopoly of no particular land or sect. Every great world-religion has had its inspired teachers. More and more every day will the followers of each religion see that God is no respecter of prejudices or persons; that not only are those who work righteousness in all nations acceptable, but that in the midst of much error, darkness, waywardness, even wickedness, the divine light has shone and the divine hand has guided. The triumphs and disgraces of every religious system are equally historical; the goodness of God and the wickedness of man, equally significant; the shadow of the divine Spirit dimly moving in them all, equally apparent. And, as men amid the critical difficulties of life overlook one an-

other's shortcomings, in view of the undoubted excellence, the indispensable usefulness, which each is found to have, so the best men of all faiths who are conscious of their own weakness are tolerant of that of others, beholding the Spirit of God in what is excellent in all things. The relations of the spiritually-minded of all lands are thus inviolable. Nay, more: not only is each religion the offspring of the Spirit according to the needs and nature of the people among whom it arose, but, in the advancing progress and unity of mankind it is observable there is a law of unity and progressive order in the rise and spread of all the great systems of faith. For there is little doubt that religious systems have helped and influenced one another, like philosophy, like trade, like political institutions, and other human pursuits. Buddhism was the result of Hinduism; and now it is almost universally held that the religious growth of all Asia — including Judea itself, perhaps Greece and Egypt also — was affected by the spirit and teachings of Sakya-Muni. Confessedly, Christianity borrowed a great deal from Greek and Alexandrine philosophy, and from various Pagan institutions generally. The excellence of pre-existing relig-

ions was assimilated and reproduced in Christianity. Intimate relations must have existed between the ideas of Mohammed and those of Judaism, the parent of all Semitic religions, as well as those of Christianity. Islam does not despise Jesus Christ, however much some Christians may despise the founder of the Musalman faith. Buddhism spread in China, Japan, Thibet, Tartary, Persia, and formed unquestionable alliances with the primitive faiths of those comparatively little known countries. The spiritual influences of systems and nations spread invisibly and mingle, tending to unite into common centres. A universal religion is always forming in the atmosphere. And thus the commerce of religious convictions and spiritual principles has been carried on silently and unconsciously from very ancient times. It has contributed slowly to the formation of a unity between man and man, — at least toward creating aspirations for a common religion. The evidence of this is traceable among the advanced of the whole human race, but very obscure among the masses of mankind. Wherever spiritual religion arose, whether originating among one people or many, it arose out of common instincts. It was either the search for

a First Cause or a sense of the Infinite or a feeling of dependence; the first principles were much the same. Also there is no doubt, after arising, it spread all around by the subtle laws of man's progress, binding many men into one community. Religion embodied itself in scriptures, in doctrines, rules, symbols, incarnations,— in common forms of all kinds. When — according to climate or constitution or social and moral needs — it crystallized itself in definite systems, those systems in their turn influenced each other, giving rise to the ancient hope that all religious bodies may form one brotherhood. Thus the unity of truth and of man's instincts is preserved in the variety of circumstances and developments. The skeleton of all religions largely shows a common structure. Of course, the skeleton alone is not the living organism, and the other things that make it up differentiate one faith from another. But even this subsequent making up shows a connection and continuity. It is the same Hand that lays down the rudiments, and from the rudiments builds up the organic whole. The first stage of the oldest religions is the worship of the Great Power through natural forces. In Egypt, in Greece, in Persia, in

India, that was so. Natural objects are the nearest, simplest, clearest; and they bear their light on their faces. God reveals himself in the creation, and the childlike souls of the ancients directly perceived him there. The second stage of progress is looking from without within: God reveals himself in the mind, religion becomes mental,—quite metaphysical. The spiritual philosophy of Socrates, Plato, of the schools of Alexandria, of the Upanishads of India, give evidence. When the subtleties become too fine, a more positive stage forms the necessary reaction: men believe in God taking the human form, incarnation becomes the common principle of all religions. But even the doctrine of incarnation may go too far; it may defeat its ends, and make some such protest necessary as the system of Mohammed made against the degraded Christianity of the sixth century. Thus something like a very common principle and process becomes apparent in the formation of the chief religious systems, so far as we know of them. Coming from common instincts, common truths, common processes, religion proves its source also is common; namely, the Spirit of God. The commonness and continuity of

religions become still more interesting when it is found out that each supplements the others, each emphasizes one all-essential feature which the others generally or lightly touch, each represents one great permanent principle, while all constitute the many-sidedfulness of God's self-revelation. Hinduism stands for philosophic spirituality and emotion, Buddhism for ethics and humanity, Christianity for the fulness of God's incarnation in man, while Mohammedanism is the champion of uncompromising monotheism. It has been proved by history that each of these systems absolutely, without the light and strength of any of the others, would produce consequences great indeed, but neither wholly desirable nor permanent. Buddhism, though for a long time it supplanted the parent system, was the fulfilment of the prophecy of universal peace which Hinduism had made; and when, in its turn, it was outgrown by the instincts of the Aryans, it had to leave India indeed forever, but it contributed quite as much to Indian religion as it had ever borrowed. Christianity fulfilled not only the Hebrew prophecy of God's kingdom, but fulfilled also the promise of the Hindu books. The Mohammedans claim that Mohammed was the

comforter spoken of by Christ. There are not a few to-day who maintain that the Oriental religions, and notably Hinduism, shed more light upon the secrets of the life of Jesus than the exegists and commentators can furnish; and men would be better Hindus — that is, purer and more spiritual — if they had greater reverence and appreciation of the message of the Son of Man. These systems were given to exalt man and reveal God; and, inasmuch as they have spread among various nations with a variety of spiritual temperaments, they will then work out their destiny when they have allied themselves with each other, that the Spirit's strength and light and fulness in one may be the strength and light and fulness of all.

The ultimate oneness of religion in all lands and races has been the dream of devout spirits everywhere. This is the impulse of missionary activity, of internal organization, of progressive ministry, and the literary effort of religious men. And, so far as these agencies have been successful, communities of the devout have come closer, and one spirit has begun to move in all religions.

The fulness of light and spiritual life mentioned above finds its embodiment in what I call the

Dispensation of the Spirit to the present age. Every great religion is widening on its own basis. Christianity has begun to fall back upon the universal principles whereon Jesus founded his message. Hinduism is daily rationalizing itself, and going back to that search for the Infinite which inspired the formation of the Vedas and Upanishads. Islam is going through repeated reforms, and also aiming at a higher and more universal spirituality than it showed before. Hafez and Sadi command greater popularity now than the exponents of more orthodox forms. Even Buddhism is slowly rising out of its reputed agnosticism, and courting the alliances of theistic bodies in the civilized world. The result of the researches of comparative religion proves the sympathy of all faiths and the possibility of the expansion of their common principles into greater unity. Akbar in the sixteenth century gathered representatives of different religions present at his court into friendly gatherings for the purpose of finding out a common basis for all. And now, after three hundred years, in Chicago, without any political pressure or imperial authority, the more advanced representatives of these very faiths enthusiastically meet, and suc-

cessfully prove that men can be united and can honor each other with no other creed than God's fatherhood and the love of their neighbors.

All this amply shows that the Spirit of God is working in the midst of all religious communities to bring about a great harmony. This will undoubtedly characterize the religion of the future. We maintain that harmony has come in the simple faith of the Brahmo-Somaj, where the Spirit of God is all in all, both for worship and the sanctity of personal character. All scriptures find acceptance with us; all prophets find honor, allegiance, and imitation; all records of experience in spiritual life produce and awaken aspiration and genuine response. But everything points to and ends in union with God, "the One without a second." The self-revelations of the Spirit in the great cosmos, as exhibited in rapt communion with nature, such as the New Dispensation incessantly urges; the transcendental spiritualities of the seers and prophets, left in the example of their faith and character,— are the continued ambition of the devotee in the New Dispensation of the Brahmo-Somaj. The universal truth of the incarnation of the Spirit of God is found in the excellence of

every holy man's life, and all these excellences are typified and summed up in the life of the Son of Man. Divine humanity is the highest self-revelation of God, and divine humanity has always meant to us the universal brotherhood of man. But the aspirations of the age are not satisfied with all this; they claim the immediate presence of the Spirit of God in direct communion with every man's heart. The age looks for the great Comforter promised by Christ, who will reveal all, teach all, explain all, and fulfil all. This, to our mind, is the culmination of that progressive order which links all religions and all nations to each other.

The religious life of mankind began with the simple worship of the Spirit of God, as among the Hindus and Hebrews. Indeed, the Hindu thought of him as the cosmic power and the Hebrew as the personal power; but still it was the One Power of truth, wisdom, and goodness. Simple as it was, it included within itself all the great evolutions of coming centuries and all the spiritual possibilities of man.

And now in the fulness of time these evolutions and spiritual experiences, these systems and phi-

losophies, have again simplified themselves into an all-absorbing faith in the one Spirit of God. It was a seed at first, and a bare possibility: it is a great development and a great synthesis now; but the full manifestation of the Spirit-God is the alpha and omega of all religious history. When the great Aryans first addressed God as "the One without a second," or when God gave his name to Moses as the "I Am," neither the one nor the other knew what infinite varieties of truth that included. And now that these varieties lie before us in their endless expansion, once more does the throbbing soul of the age feel a mighty craving to consolidate them into an eternal unity, and that unity the Dispensation of the Spirit of God.

What greater varieties, what inconceivable advancements, this Dispensation will unfold in the future, who can tell? All the eternal developments lie hidden in it. But this I do declare, that mankind needs harmony and union in God. The energy of faith and character has been exhausted by the ceaseless struggles of brother with brother, and of discords in his name whose highest Spirit is unutterable peace. We all seek for repose, for love, for mutual help, for a great com-

mon faith. In satisfaction of that universal search the Eternal reveals himself as the Giver of all great dispensations and the unity of the highest aspirations of man.

The century is nearing its close, like a long, dreary night; and over the darkened horizon of our many doubts and disbeliefs the dawn of a better day dimly smiles. The nineteenth century is full of great scientific discoveries and material advancements, full also of deep unrest and uncertainties. May we not hope that, in the approaching cycle of time, science and spirituality, philosophy and faith, doubts, distresses, and strivings, will find their rest and reconciliation in the eternal realities of the Dispensation of the Spirit? The procession of that great Holy Spirit has been through all the vast stages of human evolution. The self-revelation of the Spirit seems to be at its last stage, if it has any end at all. India calls upon all the world to mark the footprints of the Eternal Spirit left on the sands of time wherever the waters of religion have been, and to follow the leading of the Father of truth to that far-off destiny where all destinies of all men and nations are reconciled.

CHAPTER XVII.

LIVE IN THE SPIRIT.

TO say that God lives in man is not necessarily to say that man lives in God. When we live in God, there is a conscious reality of the Divine Presence, which is the highest reward of the devout. Within man's soul, not in law nor scripture nor work is the true secret of his heavenly relationship. There is the image of God enshrined. There every one discovers the highest and best in him as divine. That is resemblance to God, the sonship of God. When the tyrannies of flesh for one moment cease, when the fever of earthly desires finds a brief remission, then the consciousness of the supreme fact of the Spirit's indwelling glows into attitudes of blessedness which intensify the whole being and draw it within. In union of the spirit with the Spirit the sense of everything else is drowned. All our varied faculties resolve into channels through which the abundance of God is poured within.

There are infinite diversities of the manifestation of God. No two men realize the Spirit exactly alike: It depends upon the make and the need of each soul. The aspirations of each find a fulfilment, and each fulfilment is a revelation. And the record of the revelations makes a scripture. When everything inside kindles into the divine, it becomes most difficult to say what is ours, what is God's. All is of God. The Spirit is all in all. Dispossessed of every power, every pride, with nothing to call its own, this vaunted self finds itself an empty sac, a mere sense of being wholly dependent upon Him who fills it. What the fruit is to the rind, the corn to the husk, the jewel to the setting, God is to me, so cries the devotee. Without a consciousness of self-existence, the hundred beatitudes that make communion cannot be realized. But this sense of being is only an emptiness, O Spirit, without thy all-filling presence and perfection. Thou art the life of the soul, life of the body. We know not what we are: we only know we are in thee! Upon the soul as an organic centre the infinite forces of the Spirit have their ceaseless play. The feelings rise and fall, the intelligence presents an ever-changing panorama,

motives flit across in ghostly succession. The Divine countenance is seen in all its varying glory, mirrored everywhere. Such is the beginning of life in the Spirit. There is a wonderful variety of change and motion, impulse, energy, insight, growth, thought, and expression, when the Spirit is active within the heart.

Oh, the blessedness of the certainty of the sense that God as the Spirit *is*! that he is here, within, around, that he is perceptible, recognisable, personal, infinitely helpful and loving! As soon as this is fully felt, the Unseen One embodies himself in the glories of creation. His providence takes shape in the events that happen around us, his wisdom and his will in the circumstances that environ us. His self-revelation glows in all men, most of all in the world's leaders and ministers, in none so much as the Son of Man. He becomes force, life, design, mind; he becomes universal life, humanity, divinity, all in one. Through all the senses of the body, through all the faculties of the soul, he pours into us. We stand awe-struck, we are stilled; there is no other wish felt but to find our being in him, to find our destiny fulfilled in him. Through the medium of God's intelli-

gence the reason sees, as with a spectrum, all things resolve into their primitive hues, all things are spiritual. The love of God reconciles petty hatreds; and through kindness or through forgiveness, through sympathy and tender peacefulness and universal good-will, all men take new forms,—friends as well as enemies,—all men assimilate themselves into multiform humanity. God loves all men, the vilest and the best, only he has no part in their wickedness.

The wicked find a fearful rebuff in the pure character of those filled with divine holiness. The rebuff is proportionate to the inevitable hatred they feel against the good. Goodness never hates. Evil-mindedness is full of hate, and brings the recoil of its violent feelings on itself. The stillness of the spirit when God's Spirit visits it does not long remain still. Communion is still, but communion invariably results in activity. The soul is receptive, living, fertile; the soul, which is the sublimest in all created nature, is, in Hindu idea, the female principle; it is overshadowed, it conceives, bears, brings forth. When united with God's Spirit, there is endless change, motion, impulse, aspiration, hope, pain, joy, insight, resolu-

tion; but it all takes finality in character, in work. There is no truly good work without spiritual life of some kind, and there is no spirituality without lasting good work. Convictions glow like sunlight, motives are inspired which scorn every self-interest, love yearns after every creature, there is not an inactive moment in the twenty-four hours, and the sense of holiness becomes an atmosphere in which the spirit floats like an angel. We become the very highest and best according to our possibilities. All life tends to action, the inner must prove itself in the outer, impulse must consolidate itself in character. Men, things, events, circumstances, crowd on all sides, and conspire every moment to negative our spiritual experiences. When the world compliments and appreciates, we are elated, and feel big; when the world belittles us, we shrink like a paper bag. Which is true,—what men think of us or what we think of ourselves? Or are both untrue? The man to whom the Spirit of God has come is bound to overcome this contradiction, to set all experiences, whether in life outside or heart within, singing to the same tune. The kingdom of heaven must be established outside if you have established it in yourself, or your finding God is a pretence.

Why do I say the soul proves its impulses in acts? Why not say the Spirit of God proves, illustrates, and glorifies himself in all through which the believer is made to pass? Every aspiration, every hope, every good resolution, every promise that is delayed, must be made a reality in life's scenes. Indeed, often in the loftiest spiritualities of the devout there is a thread of self-will that winds itself unperceived, and the stern facts of life must disillusionize the sons of God, and correct their unconscious bias. The web of events, however tangled or unintelligible, is woven by the unseen spiritual Hand to disjoin man's destiny from the thousand consequences of his self-willed acts. Indeed, it is not easy to disentangle the human and the divine, to lay down the line where the one ends and the other begins, so often do the two mix, mingle, and become one; but yet the heart knows its own bitterness, knows that in its highest and best there is often the earthly stain which nothing but the fires of God can burn away. Those fires are kindled for us in the world into which we must go forth. The sacrificial ground is laid out, the fuels are piled together, events and things and circumstances are poured into the soul's

interstices, God's will kindles the fire. How our passions burn like crackling thorns, our wishes and interests are turned to ashes, our plans crumble to the dust, all insidious carnalities, disguised conceits, gilded affections of the world consume, die never to come back but as spectres of the past! Ay, religious contemplation is a fine occupation; but religious life is a frightful reality.

The worst opposition to our impulses comes from men, but there is a worse still that comes from ourselves. Nothing incapacitates a man so much as the rottenness of his own heart. Yet the Spirit of God is; only one moment before we found he had poured his consolation into us, like the genial influences of climate and health. Blind and perplexed, we still look up to him; drunk and thoughtless, we pray to him. And then from the unseen interior he reveals himself in the externals of life. There is some secret spring in the machinery of the soul, by touching which impulse is turned into character. In the first instance, we found the Spirit's presence was instinct in nature, then instinct in all the thought-world within ourselves; now the Spirit glows out again in every untoward thing and event. In every gloomy tract

of life, in every meanness of circumstance, there is a dispensation of God. Faith in the providence of God marvellously enlightens. There is a secret wisdom behind all our follies. When the heart's floodgates are suddenly uplifted, depth opens within depth, heaven opens above heaven. Every relation, every experience, every joy, sorrow, triumph, defeat, sin, atonement,—all move in a spectral procession with a glimmer of the supernatural to unfold their secret meaning. The Spirit's self-revelation plays its drama on the stage of your inner life-history, and your own history is the key to unlock the history of all mankind. The persistence of spiritual force is undying. Never an impulse of God-vision felt on the seacoast or the mountain forest, a conviction that flashed, a yearning after holiness, a desire of self-sacrifice, a self-forgetful humanity, a throb of patriotism, but is stored up in the subterranean caverns, to be revealed again in unforeseen intervals, and shape the conduct of life. No spiritual experience is without its effect on character. Never yet an unselfish love for saint or sinner, for living creatures or the immortals in heaven, for your nation or the world at large, for goodness or beauty or truth, or God's

kingdom on earth,—never yet was an angel instinct wasted by age, weakness, or the mean treacheries of life. But, as the mystic veil of time's illusions is blown away at moments by the Eternal's breath, the latent good in your heart visits you again, you find the Spirit of God never left you, though you left him and his heavenly hosts, that he shed peace on your path in the past and the light of promise on your future. By the same law wickedness persists also; but all evil is short-lived, only goodness lasts.

The struggle of the spiritual man is to make the world around him like unto what his soul is, ever in peace with God,—peace amidst endless activity, peace amidst endless war. In that struggle he lives, he labors and dies. And what he cannot accomplish while alive, he accomplishes when dead and gone. The truest victories are after death. But, dead or alive, life begets life, spirit begets spirit. Sufferings endured, evil overcome, trials met, renunciations made, insults borne with dignity, holy trusts, forgiveness amidst provocation, secret self-humiliations, crushing losses silently taken, and the thousand other crosses of life which come to try,—these bring the Spirit's consola-

tions, these make man the comforter of man. The same sweet presence of the Fatherly Spirit that is in the inner sanctuary rules the events of life also. It is not hard to find the peace of God within: why, then, do you shrink to find or make the same peace without? Insolence, brutality, injustice, ingratitude, will never depart from the world. In your loftiest moods you shall now and again collide with them. Practically, to live in God is to be conscious of blessedness, though these things will always continue to torment you. Our very worst circumstances hide in them the precious elements of our peace, only in our spiritual blindness we do not perceive it.

Why do you forget that in every Judas that betrays his Master, in every Peter that denies him, in every high priest that wickedly judges the Son of God, in every weak time-server that sentences him, — in everything that is untoward and apparently unjust, the all-holy purpose of God is a conspiring element? Yes, the loving-kindness of the Divine Presence is in all your reverses, his holiness in the sin of circumstances, his tenderness in their cruel tyranny, his inviolable purpose in the hopeless disorder and anarchy of things. Religious

culture means the perception and acceptance of the spirit-principle amidst these frequent reverses. The perfection of spiritual life is to realize its highest moods in the most contradictory circumstances. For communion with God is never a uniform or undisturbed stream, always following one unbroken direction: it is always a cross-current, a tumultuous eddy, a cycle of storms blowing your soul hither and thither, proving your own pilotage ineffectual, but nevertheless carrying you, in spite of yourself, to the other shore. He that always wants to sail in the smooth waters of contemplation wants to cheat his circumstances, thrusts aside the hand of Providence from the helm, and lands at the fool's paradise, where his imagined bliss shrinks into the insignificance of his own self. All of your circumstance is not self-made. School yourself to behold in what concerns you the same Spirit Presence that pervades everything dark or luminous in nature, everything great or striking in history, every loving and peaceful sanctity in your heart. Your environment is intensely God-pervaded. Yet often — who knows how often? — do we escape from life's struggles into the silent shrine of the soul. Undisturbed there I am, indeed, in my Father's house. There all the spirits

are who have gone before, the better land of brotherhood where no envy is, and no pride.

Return home, O wanderer, return to thyself. What doest thou in strange lands and selfish markets? Bar the gates of thy senses, close every avenue of care and interest, forsake the dear relations of the day, and commune with the realities and inspirations that form thy highest self. Commune with the great Self of all selves,—stand face to face with God, and speak to him. All the worlds sound their seraphic harmonies there, all the experiences of humanity stand out as solid truths, the past repeats its messages, the present plays its august drama, the future utters its marvellous assurances. Knowledge stands crowned with the revelation of God's wisdom, love builds the pantheon of all sweet humanities, and the law of holiness points the sceptre to what has been and shall always be. The utmost glory of the world is at best a twilight, the clearest indication of material things is an enigma, the best of men is a semi-transparent medium, and even the revelation is a sealed book. The interpretation and light of everything is in the life that is luminous by living amidst the realities of the Dispensation of the Spirit of God.

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